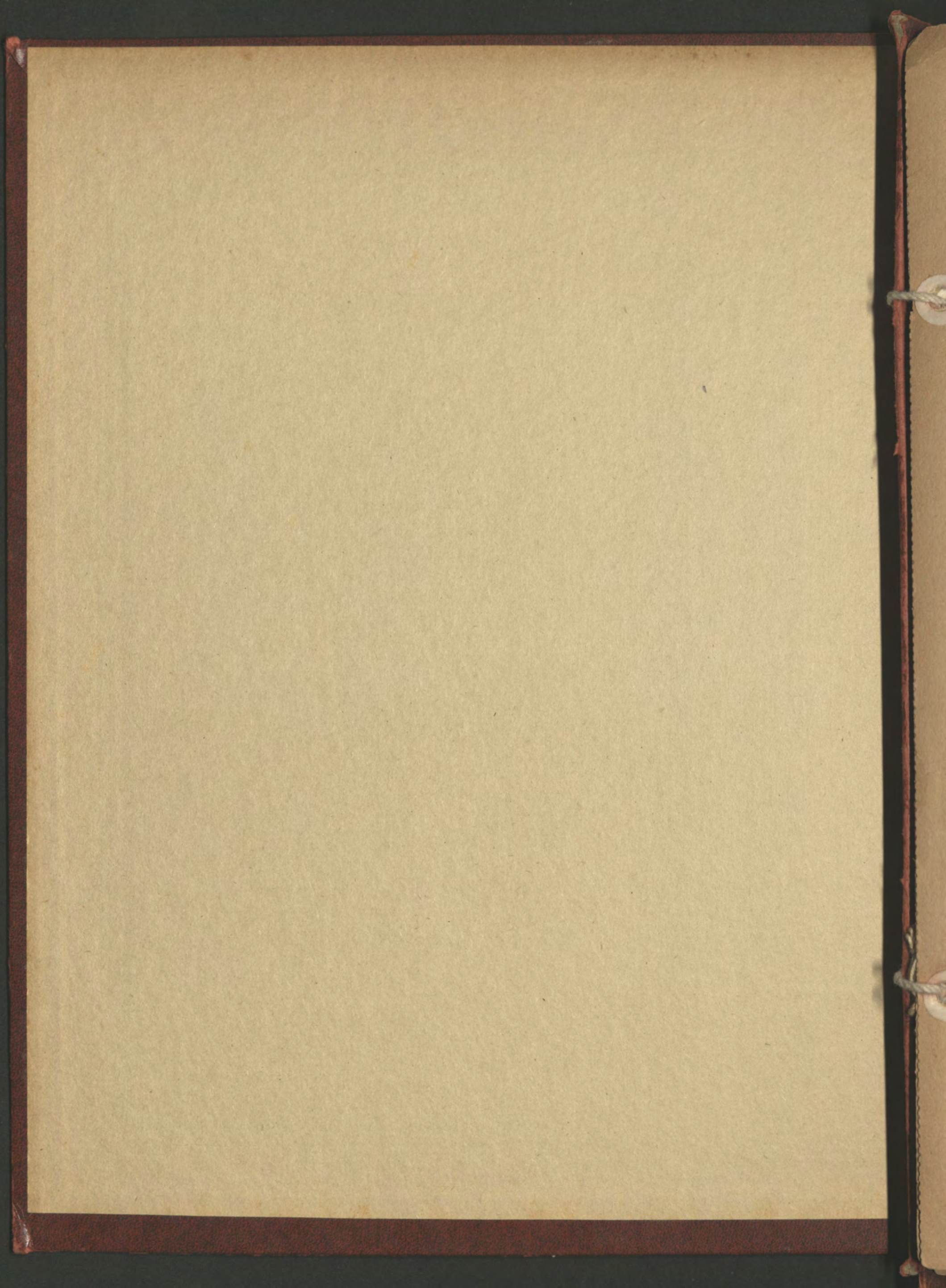


30

SCRAP  
BOOK

72-77a-P.F.M.  
#30  
Organizations -  
Mavis Hitchett  
A Association







Grace Brown Gardner

The Nantucket  
Maria Mitchell Association

FOUNDED 1902

Organizations

VI.

Maria Mitchell Association



## The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association.

Founded 1902.

Chartered July 18, 1903.

The following articles, which are on sale at the Memorial during the summer, may be ordered through the curator, at any time, and will be sent, postage prepaid, on receipt of price:

Photographs of Maria Mitchell (cabinet size), 50 cts.  
Photogravure of Maria Mitchell, 25 cts.  
Photogravure of the house, 5 cts.  
Facsimile of time of eclipse of 1831, "M. M.'s handwriting, 5 cts.  
Facsimile of gold medal awarded Prof. Mitchell by the King of Denmark in 1847, 5 cts.  
Engraving of house, with facts and dates relating to the house and to Prof. Mitchell, 5 cts.  
Photograph of house (unmounted), 35 cts.  
Photograph of library unmounted (two views), each 35 cts.  
Photograph of General Science Room (two views) each 35 cts.  
Photograph of Astronomy Room (two views), each 35 cts.  
Post cards, one exterior, four interior views, package 10 cts.  
An Astronomical Garret, by Anne Mitchell Macy, 5 cts.  
Pleistocene Deposits of Sankoty Head and Their Fossils, by Joseph A. Cushman (Chairman of Sankoty Head Committee). Publications of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association, Vol. I, No. 1, 25 cts.  
Photograph of letter from "Hon. Edward Everett to Hon. William Mitchell," announcing the award of a Gold Medal by the King of Denmark to Maria Mitchell for the discovery of a Telescopic Comet (from original in possession of Vassar College Observatory) \$1.00  
Winter address of MRS. M. A. ALBERTSON, 3940 Brown street, Philadelphia

Nov 10, 1906



THE MARIA MITCHELL MEMORIAL ON VESTAL STREET



The "Kitchen" of the Maria Mitchell House at the Time of the Annual Wild Flower Show.



## Bust of Maria Mitchell Placed in Hall of Fame.

All Nantucketers, both far and near, will be interested to learn of the honor paid to the memory of Maria Mitchell this week by the placing of a bust of the famous woman astronomer in the Hall of Fame. She is the first of her sex to be so honored.

Fifty-six men and seven women have thus far been elected to the Hall of Fame at New York University since its inception in 1900. The present electorate comprises 100 persons, practically representative of all the States. Each quinquennial year the senate of the university invites nominations from the public during March and April. The senate and electors also have the right to make nominations. The names received are considered by the senate of the university, and every name seconded by any member is placed on the preliminary ballot and sent to one or more groups of the electors. For instance, the names of authors are sent to authors, those of lawyers and jurists to jurists, those of rulers and statesmen and business men to high public officials and to men and women of affairs. The electors then return the list after having crossed off any name which they do not consider worthy of nomination.

The final ballot is sent by the university early in June to the electors, who are given until October to make the decision. A name to be inscribed in the Hall of Fame must be approved



by a majority of the ballots received from the electors before October 15, and every name which has such approval is declared elected unless disallowed before November 1 by a majority of the senate.

Miss Mitchell was elected in 1905; a tablet was set up in 1907; and now comes the signal honor of a bust, to keep company with Washington, and Grant, and Fulton, and Gilbert Stuart, and Edgar Allan Poe, and Horace Mann, and Mark Hopkins.

RETURNED.—Miss Maria Mitchell of this town, the distinguished Astronomer, returned home on Saturday last, from Europe, where she has been travelling about a year.

From the Boston Globe.

Maria Mitchell? Maria Mitchell? A famous Massachusetts woman, all unknown to fame. And yet this paradox does not, of course, suggest the whole truth. While it is probable that the older generation quite commonly, and the newer one with hardly an exception, will confess to ignorance of her, yet here and there in scholastic circles her brilliant studies and achievements in astronomy are remembered. And they are to receive notable recognition through the unveiling of a bust in the Hall of Fame at New York University. Once again may it be said, though paraphrastically, that a prophetess is not without honor, save in her own home State!

It is worthy of observation, and of considerable significance, too, that this is the first bust of a woman to be placed in the Hall of Fame for Great Americans, although there are tablets there to seven of the sex, including Miss Mitchell.

The woman to be so signally honored was born in Nantucket, August 1, 1818, and died in Lynn, June 28, 1889. She was of Quaker ancestry. Her father, William Mitchell, was a school teacher and then a bank cashier, but gave much attention to astronomy, and made meteorological observations for the government. The daughter became greatly interested at an early age in the home observatory, poorly equipped though it was, and directed herself especially to the study of nebulae and comets. During this period she was also librarian of the Nantucket Atheneum.

In 1847 Miss Mitchell announced the discovery of a new telescopic comet, for which achievement she was awarded a gold medal by the King of Denmark. Thenceforth her ability was recognized throughout the scientific world. From 1849 to 1868 she was one of the computers of the Nautical Almanac. During travels in Europe in 1857-59 she was the guest of noted foreign astronomers; and soon after her return the women of America presented her with an equatorial telescope.

Removing to Lynn with her father, she built an observatory and continued her researches until 1865, when she was called to the chair of astronomy at Vassar College. Ill-health caused her retirement in 1888.

Miss Mitchell was a member and later a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Columbia gave her the degree of LLD in 1887. An observatory in her honor was dedicated at Nantucket in 1908.

The bust to be placed in the Hall of Fame is the gift of a nephew, William Mitchell Kendall, and is the work of Emma S. Brigham. President MacCracken of Vassar unveiled it.

MAY 27, 1922

### Tablet to Maria Mitchell.

The Nantucket Maria Mitchell association was represented by three members at the unveiling on Memorial Day of a tablet to Maria Mitchell in the hall of fame at New York university. Professor Mary W. Whitney of Vassar, president of the association, delivered the address. Associated with her were Mrs. Benjamin Albertson of Philadelphia, curator of the Maria Mitchell house at Nantucket, and Mrs. Charles S. Hinchman of Philadelphia, vice-presidents of the association.

For The Inquirer and Mirror.

### Could Maria Mitchell Sew?

During the month of August spending a few weeks at Nantucket, I frequently visited a certain store on Main street. On one occasion, two ladies were engaging the attention of the clever, elderly woman who carried on this business establishment. As I could hear the conversation distinctly, why not repeat it verbatim?

One of these customers called for a "spool of cotton, No. 200"—whereupon the other, evidently a friend of the purchaser, exclaimed, "Can you sew?" "I know that your towns-woman, Maria Mitchell, didn't know how!" The store-keeper showed great surprise and the buyer of the spool, in mild vindication, related the following:—When Maria Mitchell was a young girl we attended the same school. Every Friday was devoted to sewing. As an introduction to the day's work, certain questions were put by the teacher, not only relative to this but to other subjects historical, scientific, etc. The answers to the above were given, in concert, by all of the girls, thus impressing the same upon the mind.

A "good scholar" is a "good scholar," and Maria Mitchell, at that time, was conscientiously a good sewer. In after years, indeed but a few months before Maria Mitchell left Vassar College, I was visiting her in her observatory when we were trying to call to mind the various questions put to us in those far back days. Miss Mitchell herself remembered three—two relating to sewing, one to science. The answers to which we repeated in concert, in the sing-song tone. First question—Rule for gathering? Answer to the same—Leave down "three" take up "two." Miss Mitchell could "gather!" Second question—Rule for stitching? Answer to second—"Two forward"—"one back." Miss Mitchell was a good "stitcher!" Third question—Why can a person carry two pails of water more easily than one? Answer to third—Because they balance each other and the centre of gravity remains supported at the feet.

When Maria Mitchell was able to earn twenty-five hundred dollars per year by "Science" which was tasteful as a study, interfering thereby with no other struggling woman, was it not her right to do so, giving her sewing to the many who were competent to its performance and desirous of doing the same, contenting herself with the mere use of the magnetic needle and the spider's most attenuated thread.

Yes! Maria Mitchell could sew, as I learned that day from

ONE WHO KNOWS.

Oct 22, 1894

MISS MITCHELL AT FLORENCE.—The following paragraph and its reference to a lady of this town, Miss Maria Mitchell, is taken from the letter of a correspondent of the Newark Daily Advertiser:—

"Among our recent American visitors may be mentioned Mr. Winthrop and family of Boston, with Miss Mitchell. During her too brief sojourn, this eminent lady enjoyed the opportunity of a familiar acquaintance with Mrs. Somerville, and, as you may well conceive, the intercourse between the learned female mathematicians proved mutually agreeable. Mrs. Somerville preserves, apparently, all the vigor of her natural faculties, though now near 80 years of age. She resides here permanently, with her husband and their two daughters."

JUNE 8  
1858

June 15, 1858

JUNE 16 1907



### Discovered a Comet at Nantucket.

Maria Mitchell's home in Vestal street, Nantucket, is to be preserved intact for all time as a memorial to the great woman astronomer. It is the only house in America which is being preserved solely as the birthplace of a woman.

Four years ago there was a possibility that the home would pass out of the Mitchell family, and some of the faculty at Vassar, where for years Maria Mitchell was professor of astronomy, joined hands to start a movement to save the old home.

The Maria Mitchell Memorial Association has resulted. It has more than 300 members and possesses moderate funds. One of the first steps taken by the association was the purchase of the house, and with the growth of the membership, as the project became better known among the hundreds of admirers of Maria Mitchell, the plans waxed more ambitious. By the present arrangement, the astronomy and general science rooms, the library, the bedrooms and the quaint old kitchen will all be maintained.

Erected 117 years ago, the old house stands as an excellent type of the Nantucket dwelling made famous in history, with its great beams, low ceilings, interior shutters, and especially its huge, roomy "garret." This garret is no common garret, either, for it has a quaint tale interwoven with it which forms the theme for Ann Mitchell Macy's "An Astronomical Garret."

Away back in the twenties of the last century, Maria Mitchell, one of Nantucket's bright-eyed little lassies, used to climb to the roof of the family home just before "sand man time" every summer evening to "watch the pretty stars." Long before she was 10 years old the little maid knew the heavens and the relative locations of the stars as well as she knew the streets of her native town. Her father, the Hon. William Mitchell, for years a master in the island schools, and later cashier of the national bank, was delighted with the bent of his small daughter's mind, and he encouraged her. He himself was interested in scientific research, and he taught her to count the seconds by the chronometer while he studied the stars. She learned this so readily that later, when he was employed to "rate" the chronometers of the Nantucket whaling fleet, Maria was his valuable assistant.

In 1831 during the total eclipse of the sun, Mr. Mitchell removed the sash of a parlor window of the home to make an observation, and while he performed this task his 12-year-old daughter counted the seconds for him.

In her diary, Maria Mitchell, 54 years later, mentioned the fact that she again counted the seconds during a total solar eclipse, but with a class of eager Vassar students at her side taking the observation instead of her beloved father.

As she grew up, Maria Mitchell devoted her attention assiduously to astronomy mastering it with the ease of a born scientist. For 20 years a little closet 3 feet by 4, located in the family house, served as her study. It was fitted with a shelf and a chair, and here she did all her work until she was made professor of astronomy and director of the observatory upon the founding of Vassar, in 1863. She held that position until 1888, when failing health necessitated her retirement, and she was made professor emeritus.

It was before she became identified with Vassar that Maria Mitchell made the discovery that caused her name to be famous the world over, and which won her the King of Denmark's gold medal for the first telescopic discovery of a comet.

It was the evening of Oct. 1 1847, that she made this famous discovery. For years she had been in the habit of spending a few hours nightly in her little observatory on the roof of her home to "sweep the heavens" with her telescope. This particular evening there were guests at the house, but she excused herself and went to keep her nightly vigil. During the hours she spent on the roof that night the lens of her little telescope revealed to her a new comet.

She made the discovery known next day and recorded it. Two days later the comet was seen by the observer at Rome. On the 7th of the month it was noticed at Kent, England, and on the 11th at Hamburg. But the world admitted that the real discoverer of the comet was Maria Mitchell with her little telescope, the "Little Dolland," on the roof of her Nantucket home.

Another honor came to Maria Mitchell when, in 1859, she was given a bronze medal by the republic of San Marino, in Italy.

During her years of work and study Maria Mitchell gave to the world of science much that is prized today. She was the first woman to be elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and early in her career she was made a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In 1869 she was invited to join the American Philosophical Society, founded by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia. She was also a member of the New England Woman's Club of Boston and of the New York Sorosis, as well as other kindred organizations throughout the country.

Miss Mitchell received her degree of Ph. D. from Rutgers' College in 1870. Her first degree of LL. D. came from Hanover College in 1882, and she got another from Columbia University in 1887, two years before her death. Her name is one of the two women's names on the memorial window in the Boston Public Library.

During her scientific career Miss Mitchell crossed the Atlantic twice for the purpose of visiting European observatories. Was received and entertained at the observatories at Liverpool, Greenwich, Cambridge, Glasgow, Paris, Rome and Pulkova. In her diary she said of these visits: "I tried to see in what way they are superior to us; not in what way they are inferior."

The house which is now to be preserved as a lasting memorial to this woman was occupied from 1816 until 1900 by some branch or other of the Mitchell family. The memorial association has placed it in good repair. The furnishings are old-fashioned, and for the most part the appearance of the house has changed but little since the time when Maria Mitchell passed her youthful days "watching the pretty stars." There are "knotted paintings" on some of the walls, and these in themselves are interesting, since their composition is a lost art.

The library of the old house contains Prof. Mitchell's scientific works, some of her interesting lecture notes and many of her manuscripts on scientific subjects.

The memorial association numbers some of the best known scientists in the country. Its officers are women well known in educational work. Prof. Mary W. Whitney of Vassar is president; Prof. Laura J. Wylie, Ph. D., Mrs. Elizabeth Powell Bond and Mrs. Charles S. Hinchman are vice-presidents; Miss Eliza R. Mitchell of Philadelphia is treasurer; Miss Alla W. Foster of Roxbury is secretary, and the curator and librarian is Mrs. Mary A. Albertson of Philadelphia, a descendant of the Mitchell family.—Boston Sunday Herald, 7th.

APRIL 20, 1907

### Maria Mitchell a Quaker Girl Famed in Science.

America's "Hall of Fame" this year holds one of its quinquennial elections. Nominations closed May 1 with a proposed list of ninety-one names, eighty-seven of which are men and four women who have distinguished themselves in various walks of life. Final votes will have been taken by October 1 and the names of the elected announced.

The original gift, which established the "Hall of Fame" at New York University in 1900, made provision only for America's famous men, but in 1905 a hall of fame for America's noted women was added. To date there are only six names in the women's "Hall of Fame," although under the rules fourteen could have been placed there, and with this year's election sixteen. The six women so far recognized as America's most famous are: Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mary Lyon, Emma Willard, Frances E. Willard, Charlotte S. Cushman, and Maria Mitchell.

Of these six perhaps the name of Maria Mitchell stands out as steadily and a bit more brilliantly than those of the others. She was elected to the Hall of Fame because of her work as an astronomer, and is the only woman of scientific attainment thus far to receive that recognition. Her story is an inspiring one; she was of humble birth and parentage, yet she lived to be decorated by a king and acclaimed by the world's great as an authority in her chosen work. She disclaimed any special endowment of brains and is said to have remarked that she was "born of only ordinary capacity, but of extraordinary persistency." Only extraordinary persistency could have placed her on the pinnacle of the difficult science which she set out to master.

Maria Mitchell was born on the island of Nantucket, Mass., August 1, 1818. Her parents were Quakers and their New England characteristics of perseverance, frugality and habits of cheerful work were early instilled into the girl. Her father was a schoolmaster and perhaps more than an amateur astronomer, for he was far enough advanced to carry on independent work. Maria Mitchell became interested in astronomy quite early, she was an apt pupil to her father, and a diligent student. When only 11 she became her father's assistant in his school.

The Mitchell family was not possessed of money and at the age of 18 Maria was compelled to earn her own living. She became librarian for the Nantucket Atheneum, which post she held without interruption twenty years. She devoted her day time to her duties as a librarian, her evenings she spent with her telescope and her studies in mathematics. Only a passion for her subject could have kept her all these years plugging along at a science which is at once the most difficult and the most fascinating in the field of knowledge.

In 1847 her patient work was rewarded by the discovery of a new comet. This feat entitled her to the gold medal offered by King Frederick VI of Denmark to the discoverer of a telescopic comet. Besides this the cantons of Switzerland voted her a similar recognition of her services to science.

Later the United States government sought her assistance to do much difficult mathematical work on the coast survey and also to help in the preparation of the American Nautical Almanac. She went abroad in 1857 and made the tour of the celebrated observatories of Europe where a cordial reception was given her by foreign astronomers, and her abilities recognized and honored by membership in many scientific circles; she enjoyed the friendship of Mary Somerville, George Eliot, Struve and Humboldt, and in England was the honored guest of the distinguished Herschel family, and while on the continent was welcomed in observatories which, because of their being under monkish rule, had never before permitted any woman within their sacred precincts.

During her absence abroad her friends in Boston built an observatory in Nantucket for her use, a queer little beehive affair in this day of modern observatories, and fitted it with a more powerful telescope than she had been able to obtain before. Here on her return from Europe, Miss Mitchell spent her time in quiet pursuit of her astronomical investigations until 1865, when she was called to the professorship of astronomy in Vassar college, which had just been opened.

She at once demonstrated her abilities as a teacher, and her earnestness and simplicity were not without their effect on the college at large. In her manner she was apt to be somewhat abrupt and hard, the careless or stupid student was something to put her out of patience, but to the earnest and willing student she often went to great lengths of kindness. Her personality was strong and invigorating, like the winds that blew over her healthy Nantucket island, and her absolute truthfulness and sincerity were elements of no little value in her work.

In 1888, she resigned her position at Vassar because of failing health and advancing years, and returned to her family at Lynn, Mass., where she moved her instruments and observatory. One American college conferred upon her the degree of doctor of philosophy, and both Hanover and Columbia gave her the doctor of laws.

She was the first woman to be elected to membership by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and she was an officer and the most distinguished member of various women's clubs and scientific associations. For several years she edited the astronomical notes of the "Scientific American," and after her death the alumni of Vassar college endowed a chair of astronomy in that institution as a memorial to her. Maria Mitchell died at Lynn, Mass., June 28, 1889.—Kansas City Times.



## Observatory is Practical Shrine To Woman Astronomer.

Last week's issue of the *Falmouth Enterprise* carried an interesting account of the Maria Mitchell Observatory, dwelling on Nantucket's own Maria Mitchell, the great woman astronomer, her life and work, and presenting a delightful picture of Miss Margaret Harwood, the Director of the Observatory.

During their recent visit to this island, Mr. and Mrs. Hough, of the *Enterprise*, spent several hours with Miss Harwood, the result being a most readable yarn, which we reprint in its entirety as follows:

In 1831 a father and daughter worked together in observation of an eclipse of the sun. Their purpose, which seems odd today, was to determine the longitude of a certain house on Vestal street, Nantucket.

The longitude of this Nantucket home was important because within its walls the chronometers of the Nantucket whaling fleet were rated and set to Greenwich time. In the palmy days of 1831 the Nantucket whalers used these chronometers to guide them to every part of the watery globe. Importance of the incident itself was that America's first woman astronomer was then beginning the study of the heavens which brought her discovery of a comet and lasting scientific fame.

In September 1935 alien eyes on the Nantucket bound steamer could not help focusing on a woman traveler who almost ran from side to side of the boat as it neared its island port. It seemed as if the island must be rising far too slowly from the sea. Then it seemed as if there was far too much that was all at once important for one pair of eyes to see.

This eager enthusiasm of the home comer is reported because the alien later discovered that of all the roofs in Nantucket-town her eyes must have been seeking particularly that of a home on Vestal street in the shadow of that house where in 1831 chronometers were adjusted.

It was passing odd that the alien voyager should be bent on a pilgrimage to Vestal street and so meet outside the threshold a mind set on the same place. That the traveler showed eager enthusiasm for her homecoming wasn't odd at all—except that she turned out not to be a native



MARIA MITCHELL

Nantucketer. She was joyously returning for a winter on the island out at sea after a season's travel in Europe. The alien likes to think that her eagerness visualizes the hold Nantucket takes on anyone who goes to live there, a hold which withstands the pulling of all other fascinating parts of the world.

The informal meeting of the pilgrim and the homecomer bound to Vestal street dramatizes a fact that is typical of Nantucket. It shows how little time changes things there and how the island cleaves to and perpetuates tradition. For the study of astronomy which began on Vestal street in 1818 is carried on there today. The enthusiastic returning traveler was Miss Margaret Harwood, director of the Maria Mitchell Observatory. She had been abroad to astronomical congresses in Paris and Berne. She was returning to active scientific work at home. She will forgive this turning of a magnifying glass upon emotions which should be her private own because she is constantly turning a telescope on the secrets which belong to the Milky Way—and publishing them.

The telescope that she uses was presented by the women of America in 1859. Maria Mitchell, pioneer of her sex, was born in Nantucket, August 1, 1818. She had made a record to kindle the emotions of womanhood by 1859. Maria was the daughter of a Quaker teacher and self-taught astronomer. Besides tinkering with chronometers he made calculations for the Coast Guard. He grounded his daughter in the science she was to follow all her life. On October 1, 1847, Maria Mitchell won the attention of the astronomical world and a king's medal by discovering a telescopic comet. In 1848 she was the first woman to be elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. New honors followed rapidly. In 1857 she visited the observatories of Europe and amused herself by making elaborate mathematical calculations with the great Sir John Herschel—penciled pages of figures which now hang framed on the wall of her birthplace. Manuscripts reporting her long study of Jupiter and Saturn are also in the memorial house.

From 1865 to 1888 Miss Mitchell was professor of astronomy at Vassar and director of its observatory. Through these years she was recipient of many honors and leader of women scientists. In 1889 she died. A few years later her name was sculptured in the frieze of the Boston Public Library. In 1907 a tablet to her was unveiled in the Hall of Fame at New York University. It was in 1902 that loyal Nantucketers bought her Vestal street birthplace and laid the groundwork for the association which now perpetuates her memory. In 1908 the observatory was built next door to the memorial house.

Nowadays the association has manifold activities. With Maria's old telescope and new equipment the resident director carries on a study of a particular cluster in the Milky Way. Astronomical fellowships are fostered. The observatory is an almost yearly meeting place of scientific groups. Each summer it is opened regularly that the visitor to Nantucket may see with his own eyes what Venus and Jupiter look like. To foster popular interest in the skies, Miss Harwood writes each month an astronomical article for the *Nantucket Inquirer and Mirror* and the *Falmouth Enterprise*.

Maria Mitchell's birthplace is maintained as a summer museum. It is a typical old New England house, well worth seeing for itself. A natural science department of the association collects information on the flora and fauna of Nantucket. In summer there is a daily wild flower exhibit which is typical of the effort to interest the public that is promoted with classes for children and with lectures. Across Vestal street from the memorial house a scientific library is maintained.

It is an interesting experience to climb the little brick observatory and to see Miss Harwood roll back the roof which opens up a panorama of starlit sky. Then one can look through Maria Mitchell's telescope and see Saturn, for instance, transformed from a mere bright star to a ringed globe. The experience is both pilgrimage to a shrine and glimpse at the accomplishments of modern astronomy for interesting star photographs the observatory has taken and suggest to the lay visitor some of the mysteries science is prying into.

Astronomers by habit seek high places in unusually clear air for location of their observatories. This is why Miss Harwood's desk is heaped with letters from distant parts—reports from South Africa, Peru, or Mount Wilson. But one illustration will suggest that the Nantucket station's location has more than historic advantage. The island is an important place for the observation of meteors, especially the brilliant fireballs which appear from time to time but cannot be predicted. Besides adding knowledge of the structure of the upper atmosphere and the physical nature of these bodies, the study of meteors is expected to contribute toward understanding of the structure of interstellar and intergalactic space. A meteor observation at this Nantucket outpost is often an indispensable link toward defining the path and distance of a fireball which has also been observed on the mainland.

If sea fogs obscure the atmosphere on important nights, the scientist must console herself with the thought that at least she has the joy of living on old Nantucket. Whatever the handicaps of the outlying sea-post, photographing the stars goes steadily on. At the end of last year Maria Mitchell Observatory had a collection of 1,345 plates from which studied measurements are slowly and surely adding to man's knowledge of the heavens. There is a significance as well as sentiment to the work which womanhood in 1935 is doing to perpetuate the research of the woman pioneer of a century ago.

OCTOBER 26, 1935

## 100th Anniversary of Discovery of Comet by Maria Mitchell.

Next Wednesday, October 1, will mark the one hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the comet by Maria Mitchell for which she received a gold medal from the King of Denmark.

To celebrate this event, the Maria Mitchell Observatory and the Library will be open at eight o'clock in the evening. In addition to a lecture with lantern slides and an exhibit, visitors will be permitted to look through both of the telescopes used by Miss Mitchell: the 3-inch Dolland, with which she found the comet, and the 5-inch Alvan Clark telescope presented to her by the women of America.

## Comet Discovery Commemorated At Observatory

"Not in vain do we observe the rising and the setting of the constellations." This is a translation from the gold medal awarded Maria Mitchell, then only 29, for her discovery of a comet on October 1, 1847.

Wednesday evening about 7 persons gathered in the Maria Mitchell Library to commemorate the 100th anniversary of that discovery. Miss Margaret Harwood, director of the observatory since 1916, gave the full story of the discovery, reading the recorded details from the manuscript of a completed, unpublished biography of Miss Mitchell written by Helen Wright.

Lantern slides of comets similar to the one discovered by Miss Mitchell, eclipses, sunbursts and other astronomical phenomena illustrated the talk.

After the talk small groups were permitted to gaze through the 15 inch telescope fixed for moon observation. Miss Harwood, on the deck of the observatory, adjusted Miss Mitchell's three inch telescope, the one which she used that night 100 years ago, on two different sets of double stars.

There can be no doubt of the scientific position Nantucket holds even yet because of the mental keenness, patience with the changing skies and its starry personnel, which Maria Mitchell showed so many years ago.

Oct 3, 1947

## Life of Astronomer To Be Published

"Sweeper in the Sky," a life story of Maria Mitchell, famous Island astronomer, by Helen Wright will be published by MacMillan in the Summer of 1948.

Miss Wright, now Mrs. John F. Hawkins, is a graduate of Vassar, class of 1937. She spent nearly one year in Nantucket, utilizing available sources of material for details of Miss Mitchell's life. She is editor and compiler of the *Treasury of Science*, published in 1943 by Harper Brothers.

The author, Mr. and Mrs. C. Neil Barney, were special guests who attended the broadcast Monday night on the Du Pont Cavalcade program, which dramatized moments from Maria Mitchell's life as "Diamonds in the Sky." Mr. Barney is Miss Mitchell's grandnephew.

Actors who took the leading parts were Gene, June and Katharine Lockhart.

Maria Mitchell, a native of Nantucket, became one of the great astronomers following her discovery of a comet October 1, 1847. She taught at Vassar later, becoming a full professor in astronomy.

Dec. 12, 1947

Q. Who was Maria Mitchell?—L. R. T.  
A. Maria Mitchell, 1818-1889, was one of America's great woman scientists. She was an astronomer and discovered several comets and also won distinction as a novelist and poet.

???

Even Star Washington, D.C.

1947-12-10



October 1st was the birthday of a comet—the birthday, rather, of its discovery. It would be out of the question to try to celebrate the anniversaries of all the comets that have flashed their tails through the ages; but "Miss Mitchell's comet" is very special, for it was discovered, in 1847, by America's first woman astronomer and under conditions most romantic.

A little more than a century ago, when out on the lonely island of Nantucket men dived into the surrounding depths for whales and cod, a child was born whose destiny it was to lift her eyes upward to the heavens. The child was named Maria Mitchell. She lived to the age of 71 and is now gone this many a year, but in the Hall of Fame at New York University one may find her bust today. Maria Mitchell, born on Nantucket Island August 1, 1818, carved for herself, retiringly and with patient devotion to science, a celebrity that became worldwide.

Miss Mitchell sighted the comet which afterward bore her name from the roof of the Pacific Bank on Main street. The bank is still doing business under its fine old spreading elms and with Main street at its feet, though commercial interests are no longer linked with the stars in their courses.

#### A Novel Observatory.

It may be felt that the roof of a bank is a strange perch for a telescope. The explanation, however, is simple. Maria's father, William Mitchell, was at that time cashier and, in the absence of a regular observatory, this roof proved quite convenient. Outside office hours he was an astronomer, numbering among his friends some of the most brilliant scientific minds of the century. But he was a very modest astronomer and his concern with the heavenly bodies seems to have been practically restricted to work for the mariners of Nantucket. It was the custom for the captains of whaling ships to bring their chronometers to him at the end of a voyage to be "rated." For this purpose the sextant was employed—an instrument that Maria learned, at an early age, to use. She showed an aptitude for mathematics and was a great help to her father. But Maria's real interest in astronomy dates from a certain memorable eclipse of the sun.

The annular eclipse occurred in 1831, when Maria was 12½ years old. William Mitchell wanted to obtain, through observation of this phenomenon, the exact latitude and longitude of his house, which knowledge was necessary to his work on the ships' chronometers. Maria volunteered to help him. She counted the seconds and found the experience so enthralling that thereafter all her spare time was spent with the telescope and in poring over technical books.

Jupiter and Saturn were her first favorites among the stars. Possibly this choice had roots in her childhood. A piquant episode is recalled. The large attic of the family home in Vestal street (now carefully preserved as the Maria Mitchell Memorial House) was a delightful adventure

field for the children. On a certain rainy Sunday afternoon Maria and her brothers and sisters were playing up there. They constructed out of odds and ends a very realistic steamboat and went on memorable voyages. Forming part of the cargo were some wooden balls of varying sizes, which William Mitchell used in illustrating phases of his astronomical work. The balls represented major planets.

In the course of one of the voyages the ship's cargo appears to have shifted. The planets rolled overboard and, unfortunately, went bounding off down the stairs—Jupiter first, closely followed by Saturn, with Vesta, Pallas, Juno and Ceres bringing up the rear. The clatter was appalling. It would not have been so bad had the planets come to rest at the foot of this attic flight. Perversely they did not, but, turning a corner, went bouncing down a second flight, which brought them at length to the very feet of Mr. Mitchell, who was taking his Sunday afternoon nap. The Sabbath peace had been shattered and the steamboat up under the shingles made no more trips that day.

Yet William Mitchell, although he was a Quaker, was by no means a stern and unbending ascetic. The Mitchells seem to have been decidedly advanced spirits and sometimes caused the eyebrows of Nantucket to lift a little. Being a Quaker, of course, made certain laws of conduct de rigueur; yet Mr. Mitchell is described as having been ever at war, if never flagrantly, with the crippling severities of a social order into which he did not very snugly fit.

One day the town was thrown into consternation by the report that into the Mitchell home had been introduced a piano. An old and valued friend questioned him about it, his tones grave with remonstrance.

"William, I hear thee has a piano in thy house."

"Yes, my daughters have," was the quiet reply.

"But it is in thy home."

"Yes; but my home is my children's home as well as mine, and I propose that they shall not be obliged to go away from home for their pleasures."

The pioneer spirit, afterward so stirring to reveal itself in Maria Mitchell's life, found many wistful expressions in the home atmosphere with which she was surrounded. For instance, the father confessed to a love of bright colors. These his Quaker faith forbade in connection with personal adornment; but he availed himself of them in other ways. Mrs. Phebe Mitchell Kendall, Maria's sister, gives us an intimate glimpse:

### Maria Mitchell Discovered Comet 79 Years Ago.

By Edward Alden Jewell  
in New York Times.

"If he were buying books, and there was a variety of binding, he always chose the copies with red covers. Even the wooden framework of the reflecting telescope he used was painted a brilliant red. He liked a gay carpet on the floor, and the walls of the family sitting room in the house on Vestal street were covered with paper resplendent with bunches of pink roses. Suspended by a cord from the ceiling in the centre of this room was a glass bowl filled with water, used by Mr. Mitchell in his experiments on polarization of light. It flashed its dancing rainbows about the room. At the back of the house was a little garden full of gay flowers, so that if the garb of the young Mitchells was rather sombre, the setting was bright and cheerful, and the life of the house was healthy and wideawake."

So, with this sympathetic background, all through the years of her young womanhood—while the men of the island whaled and wives climbed anxiously to those curious "widow walks" on the tops of old Nantucket houses to watch for the returns from sea—Maria Mitchell pursued enigmas in the heavens with the diligence of an awakened soul.

#### Full Days in Filled Diaries.

In order to be self-supporting, for the family was not affluent, Maria worked as librarian at the Nantucket Atheneum. The post was not arduous, but regular hours had to be kept. Her days were very full, as entries in her diary of the time portray. Astronomy, though it was her sovereign interest, was never permitted to crowd out homelier duties. One of the diary jottings reads as follows:

"This morning I arose at 6, having been half asleep only for some hours, fearing that I might not be up in time to get breakfast, a task which I had volunteered to do the preceding evening. It was but half light. I made a hasty toilet; then I made a fire very quickly, prepared the coffee, baked the graham bread, toasted white bread, trimmed the solar lamp and made another fire in the dining room, before 7 o'clock."

The manner in which "Miss Mitchell's Comet" was discovered is characteristic of her unassuming and deprecating attitude toward matters she always approached with reverence.

On the eventful Autumn night in 1847, friends were being entertained in the parlor. But, at the accustomed hour for beginning her "star sweeping," the young astronomer punctually excused herself. Lighting a lantern she set off and was soon with her telescope on the roof of the bank. A short time later she descended in haste. Hurrying home, she drew her father aside and told him she had discovered what she believed to be a new comet. This William Mitchell promptly verified.

There was no doubt in his mind about the importance of the discovery; yet, by nature so cautious and shrinking, Maria would not permit publication of the fact at once. She supposed that other astronomers, greater than herself and provided with more powerful instruments, had already picked out this celestial newcomer. Nevertheless (and fortunately, as it developed), Mr. Mitchell wrote about it immediately in a letter to his friend, William C. Bond, director of the observatory at Cambridge.

Communication between Nantucket and the outside world was slow in those days. Gradually news of other telescope contacts began to drift in. The comet had been seen by Father de Vico on October 3 at Rome; by an observer in England on October 7, and by Mme. Rumber, wife of the director of the observatory at Hamburg, on October 11. The dates are significant, as will be seen in a moment. Maria Mitchell had discovered the comet on October 1.

Far off across the Atlantic, in Denmark, King Frederick VI had some time before announced that he would give a gold medal to the first astronomer who should discover a telescopic comet—a comet, that is, invisible to the naked eye. Scientist friends of the Mitchells, feeling certain that Maria was entitled to this medal, took the matter up. There followed a prolonged correspondence on the subject between Denmark and America.

Certain technical details had not been strictly complied with—owing to Nantucket's remote position and the fact that formal announcement had not been made at once. But eventually it was decided that William Mitchell's letter to the Cambridge observatory was sufficient, and red tape was clipped. Maria Mitchell received her medal. America's first woman astronomer, whose only instruction had been Nantucket schools, her father's teaching and her own reading, took her place among the great contemporary scientists of the world.

She traveled twice to Europe in later years, where she was received most cordially by astronomers. In 1865 she was made Professor of Astronomy and director of the observatory at Vassar. There she taught until within a year of her death. "To Maria Mitchell's broad mind," one of her friends has said, "search for truth was a gospel."

The old whaling days on Nantucket Island are gone forever, though there are still old inhabitants in the quaint town who like to relate stories of sea struggles and can explain to you very convincingly the difference between "right" and "sperm" whales. But the stars persist; the work begun by Maria Mitchell and her father is being carried on there faithfully and, indeed, fruitfully.

No longer is it necessary to climb to the roof of a bank, and Maria's queer little old-fashioned Dolland has become a museum piece. A modern, well-fitted brick observatory now adjoins the house in Vestal street—a

over



house charmingly preserving the domestic aspect of old Nantucket. In this observatory, with its revolving dome, are two telescopes that would have delighted Miss Mitchell immensely. One of them is a photographic telescope with which some valuable star pictures have been taken.

The work here is in charge of Miss Margaret Harwood, A. M., a graduate of Radcliffe, who has been appointed Fellow for an indefinite term. It is not every night, of course, that one can hope to discover a new comet; but the heavens are as yet incompletely pigeonholed.

The scope of the Maria Mitchell Association has broadened of late years to embrace botanical research. In the department Miss Alice Owen Albertson is devotedly active. She has made Nantucket's enchanting moors her own, and her book on the flora of the island is richly packed with information. Her mother was Maria Mitchell's cousin.

NOVEMBER 13, 1926

#### Maria Mitchell and the Beer Men.

Maria Mitchell, the famous astronomer, was once directed by her physician to use lager beer as a tonic. On the way to visit her sister, Mrs. Joshua Kendall of Cambridge, Mass., she stopped at a saloon and purchased a bottle of beer and afterward asked her brother-in-law to open it for her. The Mitchell family, according to the Boston Herald, spoke among themselves after the Quaker custom. "Where did thee get it, Maria?" questioned her sister. "At the saloon on the corner," replied Miss Mitchell serenely. "Why, Maria! Doesn't thee know respectable women don't go into such places?" "Oh," said Miss Mitchell, in the manner of one who has done all that could be required, "I told the man he ought to be thoroughly ashamed of his traffic."—New York Tribune.

June 9, 1906

The members of the New England Women's Club gave a reception to Prof. Maria Mitchell of Vassar College, at Boston on Thursday, 29th ult. About 200 persons were present, including several invited guests, among whom were Rev. James Freeman Clarke, Rev. S. W. Bush, and Miss Welsh of Buffalo. Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, the president of the club, presided. The ladies who spoke were Mrs. Lucy Stone, Mrs. Caroline M. Severance, who was the first president of the club; Mrs. Ednah D. Cheney, Dr. Mary J. Safford, Mrs. H. L. T. Wolcott and Miss Welsh. Short speeches were also made by Dr. Clarke and Mr. Bush. Prof. Mitchell read a poem by Mrs. Howe. It was voted at the close of the reception to hold one yearly, some time in the week between Christmas and New Year's, which should be called the "Maria Mitchell" day. Prof. Mitchell is a native of Nantucket.

Jan. 7, 1882

#### Biography of Maria Mitchell From "American Dictionary."

The lives of the distinguished folk of America are being published under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies in a "Dictionary of American Biography". This week, Volume XIII has made its appearance, and, like the first twelve volumes, is published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

The new volume contains a comprehensive biography of Maria Mitchell, Nantucket's famous woman, astronomer, whose birthplace on Vestal street, together with its attendant observatory and science library, are among the island's famous attractions.

The "Dictionary's" biography of Miss Mitchell, in part is as follows:

Mitchell, Maria (Aug. 1, 1818—June 28, 1889) astronomer and teacher, was the sister of Henry and the daughter of William Mitchell and Lydia (Coleman) Mitchell, both of Quaker ancestry. She was born on the island of Nantucket, which had been for more than a century the principal seat of the whaling industry. Its captains undertook long voyages on uncharted and perilous seas, and were perforce expert navigators and commanders of men. During their long absences their wives shouldered the family responsibilities alone and thus acquired an unusual freedom of action and independence of judgment, while their Quaker training made them simple and genuine. Born into such a community, Maria Mitchell was endowed with some of its finest traits, a keen intellect, a strong character, and a nature simple and truthful. Her father was deeply interested in astronomy and with plain equipment kept up continuous observations of the sky. He made a business of rating chronometers which were brought him by returning captains. He often called upon his children for assistance, and Maria, who was the third in a family of ten, began at an early age to be his special worker.

She excelled in arithmetic and often worked out formulas which she did not understand. She also learned to use her father's instruments, at first to help him but later for her own pleasure. Her education was carried on in the schools of Nantucket, where her teachers encouraged her love of mathematical studies, but before long she outstripped them and began working for herself.

While she was still young, an excellent opportunity came for her to cultivate her talent. She was appointed librarian of the town Athenaeum, and as her hours were not confining she found that she had abundant leisure for private study. She found the scientific shelves well stocked with books on mathematical subjects, and read such difficult books as Laplace's "Mecanique Celeste", annotated by Bowditch, and Gauss's "Theoria Motus" in the original Latin. Having in addition to her intellectual tastes a strong interest in young people, she gladly acted as guide to their reading and often formed helpful friendships with them. Both she and her father, through their interest in astronomy, were brought into contact with eminent scientific men in Boston and the vicinity whose friendship proved most valuable.

Her free evenings were spent with the telescope exploring the sky, and she observed among other objects the positions of several comets and worked out their orbits. On one eventful evening in October, 1847, she discovered a new comet. It was announced by her father to their friends in Boston, who in turn communicated it to astronomers in Europe, then the distributing center for astronomical

information. The discovery brought her a gold medal from the King of Denmark, offered several years earlier to any one who should discover a comet previously unknown. The unusual and picturesque achievement brought her friendly recognition from other astronomers and scientific men.

She was elected to membership in several learned societies, among them the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (honorary member, 1848; later fellow), was appointed a computer for the "American Ephemeris and Nautical Almanac", and was presented with an excellent telescope by a group of American women, the use of which enlarged her observing program.

Women of intellectual ambitions pointed to her work as an example of what a woman could accomplish as a scholar when given opportunity and encouragement. She was received everywhere as a person of distinction and ranked in the public eye with such progressive women as Julia Ward Howe, Lucy Stone and Mary A. Livermore, in whose projects she was deeply interested.

In 1857-58, she travelled abroad with the purpose of visiting observatories and meeting scientific men, taking with her many letters of introduction. The resulting contacts greatly enriched her experience.

After the death of her mother in 1861, she and her father removed to Lynn, Mass. In succeeding years she followed with interest the plans and fortunes of Vassar College, the new enterprise for the advanced education of women which was announced to the world in 1861, but was quite surprised when its founder, Matthew Vassar, invited her to become its first professor of astronomy. Since she had no experience as a teacher she hesitated to accept; but, encouraged by her father, she yielded and in 1865, at the age of forty-seven, took up the duties of a professor in a new and untried institution. She was the only member of the faculty widely known both at home and abroad, and her name at once inspired confidence in the college and indicated its purpose of maintaining a high standard of scholarship.

Her uncompromising support of this ideal was of inestimable value in the early days of Vassar, when its inadequate endowment made it dependent for its existence upon the approval of the somewhat unsympathetic public. She had a powerful influence upon her students, not only in their intellectual development but in preparation for their later usefulness in society. She mingled in their social life and her simplicity and wit made her fatherings in the observatory ever memorable. Her strength of character, her genuineness, her kindly human interest made her an impressive personality.

In 1869, her scientific attainments brought her election as a member of the American Philosophical Society, while her position as an educator was recognized by institutions other than Vassar, several of which conferred honorary degrees upon her.

She died in Lynn, in her seventy-first year. In 1922, a bust of her was unveiled in the Hall of Fame of New York University.

April 14, 1934

#### Maria Mitchell Memorial.

At the recent annual meeting of the proprietors of the Athenaeum, a motion was introduced of so general interest that we give it entire, feeling confident that its purpose will appeal strongly to the pride and liberality of each one of the wide circle of readers of the Nantucket papers. The motion is as follows:

Because Nantucket is the birthplace of the late Maria Mitchell, professor of Astronomy in Vassar College; because Professor Mitchell was for twenty years librarian of the Nantucket

Athenaeum—the centre of literary interest in this town since its foundation—during which period she left upon the community an impression of her character and influence for good, for all time; because of the honor reflected upon her native place from the world-wide fame won by her life-long labors in the cause of science and reform, and the honest pride in this fame felt by every worthy son and daughter of Nantucket—for these reasons it seems eminently fitting that the representatives of this institution should attempt to provide it with some suitable memorial of her.

It is therefore moved, that a committee of three be appointed by the chair, from the trustees and proprietors, the chairman of which shall be the president of the board of trustees, to take measures for procuring a durable and life-like portrait of Prof. Mitchell, to be preserved in an appropriate place in the Athenaeum building, under the control of its board of trustees; that this committee be hereby desired to confer with the family of Miss Mitchell, requesting their approval of the movement, and to offer to every descendant of Nantucket, whether resident or non-resident, the opportunity of contributing, in smaller or larger amount, to a fund for this purpose; that this committee be hereby authorized to carry the purposes of this motion to their consummation; that if, in the manner suggested above, a sum of money be raised, larger than is required for the above-named purpose, the residue be applied as the nucleus of a constantly increasing fund—to be called the Maria Mitchell memorial fund, and to remain as a perpetual memorial of her, the income of which shall be used for the purchase of books for the library, and that this fund be, as all other funds of the Nantucket Athenaeum are, under the control of its board of trustees, subject to the above-mentioned condition; that the contributors to this fund shall constitute the Maria Mitchell Memorial Association, having for its trustees and officers the trustees and officers of the Nantucket Athenaeum; that this committee be hereby authorized to issue to each contributor a contributor's certificate, signed by the president of the board of trustees, entitling him to membership in the Maria Mitchell Memorial Association, and to exhibit the portrait to friends at all times when the Athenaeum and library are open to proprietors; that this committee be hereby requested to report at a quarterly, or some other future meeting of the board of trustees, and at the next annual meeting of the proprietors.

The motion was unanimously carried, and it is earnestly hoped that every descendant of our island will feel a sense of personal responsibility that the amount of this fund shall, in the present, reflect credit on the discernment and liberality of our townspeople, and in the future shall be a constantly growing tribute to the memory of one so honored and respected here where her early life was passed.

Let no one be withheld from giving from a feeling that the offering must be small, but let every one contribute according to his ability or desire; thus making the memorial one of all our people, and securing for ourselves an abiding interest therein; thus aiding to hold in grateful and appreciative remembrance one whose early labors are so closely allied with our own history; thus showing ourselves worthy sharers in a fame, unique in that history, which has helped so much to associate the name of our island home with the ideas of exalted character, the best culture, and a noble enthusiasm for progress.

Any member of the committee, or of the board of receivers organized by them, will gladly credit contributions for the above-mentioned fund. Should offerings come from sources other than those indicated above, they will be accepted with grateful thanks.

THADDEUS C. DEFRIEZ, President.  
ELLEN O. SWAIN,  
(Address this winter, 145 Clinton St., Brooklyn, N. Y.).  
ELIZABETH G. M. BARNEY, Treasurer of Com.,  
(this winter at 22 Chatham St., Lynn, Mass.),  
Proprietor's Committee.  
Receivers.—Miss Rebecca A. Gardner, Mrs. Catherine Starbuck, Mrs. Edward W. Perry, Mr. Albert G. Brock, Miss Elma Folger, Miss Annie Chinery, Mrs. Benjamin Robinson, Miss Sarah F. Barnard, Librarian.

Jan. 11, 1890



From Hours at Home for October.

## THE TOTAL ECLIPSE OF 1869.

BY MARIA MITCHELL.

The circle of the sciences is so nearly all centre, that it is difficult to say to what are any subject of inquiry belongs. Solar eclipses, at one time the terror of the ignorant, and the study of the astronomer only, have come to be specialties also of the chemist, the physicist, and the photographer. The telescope, the camera, and the spectroscope work together, each crowded with work, and each finding its most fruitful field in the sun.

The mysterious connection of the bodies of our system is no longer supposed to be that of attraction alone; the solar spots, the aurora, the comets, the meteors, and certainly two of the planets, own some other relation and acknowledge a common kinship.

In the early days of astronomical inquiry, eclipses were observed for the purpose of determining longitudes, and of detecting errors in the lunar theory. The hypothesis born in the closet was tested in the observatory; residual errors were examined, remoulded in the mathematical curves, and again subjected to the test of the senses.

But it is not necessary to wait for an eclipse of the sun for longitude determinations, when eclipses of stars by the moon happen many times in a month, and can be observed with much more nicety, and when relative longitudes can be noted on any fine night by the click of the chronograph.

The motions of the moon are, however, a continuous subject of interest, showing, as they do, not only every change in our planetary system, but those also in the earth, reflecting, after thousands of years, even the fret of the wave upon the shore.

The astronomers tell us that there must be at least two eclipses of the sun every year; but a total eclipse is of rare occurrence, and at any one place happens only in hundreds of years.

If the moon's motion around the earth were in the plane of the earth's motion around the sun, an eclipse of the sun would happen at every new moon, as the moon would come between sun and earth, and hide the sun to some of the earth's people. And at every new moon the cone-shaped shadow is thrown towards the earth; but as the moon's motion is not in the plane of the earth's, it falls perhaps above, perhaps below the earth; or, if it be exactly at the crossing of the plane, the earth may be out of its reach, beyond the point of the conical shadow, and the eclipse will be then only partial. When the moon is nearest the earth, and it is new moon at the time it is passing through the plane of its orbit, there must be a total eclipse somewhere on the earth, for the dark shadow must sweep across its surface, as the shadows of Jupiter's satellites are seen to sweep across the disc of that planet.

With a starting-point of one eclipse, it is easy to foretell, in a rough way, the coming of others. The moon does not pass through the plane of the earth's orbit again at the same point; the foot-prints of nature never measure exactly the same. When the moon comes around again she seems to take a backward step (if we call her usual motion forward) at that point, and this backward motion continues until, in about eighteen years, she has seemed to carry this point around the whole circle of the earth's orbit. The eclipses then repeat their order with variations. A total eclipse may have become partial, or may be total to another part of the earth.

The moon, although so much smaller than the sun, is so near to us that it usually appears of about the same size (a relation between size and distance which would seem to show some other design than that of symmetrical beauty), and at the time of a total eclipse seems larger, and more than covers the sun.

But this over-covering is to a very small extent; at most it projects beyond the sun by a narrow bordering of only one-sixteenth the diameter. A total eclipse therefore lasts so long only as the time required by the moon to pass over this small arc, varying with the position of the place on the earth, the longest time being 7m. 58s.

The total eclipses of this century, observed in this country, are those of 1806, 1834, and 1869. That of 1806 was total, and central at Kinderhook, and was observed carefully in that place, and in New York and Massachusetts generally. A Spanish gentleman, Jose Jacques de Ferrer, made some very nice observations for fixing longitudes, and of physical phenomena. He says: "The disc had around it a ring, or illuminated atmosphere, which was of pearl color, and extended 6' from the disc." He calls it "the irradiation of the solar disc."

Mr. De Witt, of Albany, who observed the same, says: "The edge of the moon was strongly illuminated, and had the color of polished silver; and around a dark circle was an immense radiated glory, like a new creation, in a moment bursting on the sight, and for several minutes fixing the gaze of man in silent admiration."

The duration of this eclipse was nearly five minutes at Kinderhook; it was very short in Massachusetts; was observed at Salem by Dr. Bowditch, and at Nantucket, where it was not quite total, by Walter Folger, an excellent mathematician, and a maker of astronomical instruments.

The eclipse of 1834 was observed at Beaufort, South Carolina, by Mr. Paine, of Boston. He speaks of seeing two planets and four stars.

The corona is mentioned by all the observers of 1806, but there is no notice of "rosy protuberances."

The total eclipse of 1842 was observed by Mr. Airy, the Astronomer Royal of Greenwich; by Mr. Bailey, an English astronomer; by Otto Struve, of Pulkova, and many others, as the lunar shadow swept over the north of Italy and the southern provinces of France, Germany, and Russia. Mr. Struve says the light of the corona was too strong for the naked eye. This eclipse was the first in this century to attract attention to the "rosy protuberances" scattered around the moon's limb. Mr. Airy speaks of his surprise at sight of them. They became at once an object of interest; and at the next eclipse of 1851, Mr. Airy, Mr. Dawes, an excellent English observer, and our own Mr. Bond, of Cambridge, gave particular attention to them. Mr. Bond went to Lilla Edet, a little town in Sweden. He saw five of these prominences; he says they appeared like "clouds brightly illuminated."

Mr. Airy presented pictures of them to the Royal Art Society, and if the engravings do them justice, the appearances were somewhat different from those of August 7, 1869; not perhaps more different than are clouds in our own atmosphere.

By 1860, when another total eclipse threw its dark shadow upon civilized people, these phenomena were expected, and Mr. Airy, at his station in Spain, saw them before totality. This eclipse first suggested the possibility of observing these prominences in full sunlight.

In the eclipse of August 7, 1869, the shadow, one hundred and forty miles wide, passed obliquely across this continent from Alaska to North Carolina, falling upon no fixed observatory, but upon large cities, whose intelligent people were ready to give all needed aid to the professional astronomer. Hospitable homes in Springfield, Des Moines, and Burlington, in Louisville, Lexington, and Frankfort were freely offered. Every known astronomer received courteous invitations into the shadow. Every astronomer, professional or amateur, prepared to go. The observatories must have been left undirected; the mathematical chairs of the colleges must have been empty, and, judging from the crowded condition of hotels within the darkness, Saratoga and Newport must have felt the different set of the travelling current.

When we entered the truly palatial cars at Buffalo we heard a voice near us saying, "Tell me your longitude and I'll tell you your time," and as common people look to the town clock for their time, we knew at once that it was some astronomer, and on turning we met the gaze of an old friend, the hero of one total and three annular eclipses, ticketed to totality. As we came into the sleeping cars at Chicago, a young gentleman who was just putting himself away upon his shelf, called out to the conductor, "Do not disturb us for the night! We are an astronomical party of seven persons going to Burlington."

If a large part of the country had started for the shade, in general, it seemed as if a large part of that part had started for Burlington. The duration of the total phase in Burlington was nearly three minutes, the town was said to be healthy, and at Burlington a crowd gathered, made up of scientific men working under Government orders, under college orders, under individual orders; naturalists who desired to see the effect of a new condition of things upon the animal or insect of their special affection; clergymen who were willing to take a lesson from nature, and tourists who sought a new sensation. In the halls of the hotels we saw meetings between friends long separated, and heard joyous exclamations as gray-haired men met and shook hands and laughed, that neither could recognize in the middle-aged other the youth whom he had left, and whom he had since known only through scientific journals. Burlington is a pretty little group of villages standing upon several little knolls of a bluff of the Mississippi; it is up hill and down dale in its streets, and it is to be hoped it will be proof against the efforts of its people to straighten it out. It is beautifully heterogeneous. In some places it reminds one of the little villages which children build of toy-blocks; in others it seems like the Italian cities perched upon inaccessible hill-tops.

We arrived on the fourth of August, too late to attempt any work that day. The fifth was cloudy and threatening, and the sixth was rainy, rainy all day. The astronomers who had mounted their instruments tried to protect them from the weather; we rejoiced that ours were yet in their boxes. The Government party, under Prof. Coffin, had already planted itself upon a fine elevated field, where an observatory had been built, a rough shelter for a fine equatorial telescope to be used in photographing, a small telescope for the spectroscopic observations, and other instruments; and near by was a little meridian room, with a tiny transit instrument, which one could almost put in his pocket, for the purpose of determining accurately the condition of the chronometers.

We met, on our arrival, an invitation from the Burlington Collegiate Institute to occupy its grounds, with the assurance of the Faculty that they should be wholly at my disposal.

On examination the grounds were found to be a little elevated, and seemingly very secluded, and the offer was gratefully accepted. Some half-dozen of the graduates of our college had offered their services as assistants—one of them with a telescope—all with sharp eyes and quick perceptions.

All day on the 6th the rain continued. Near noon the barometer began to rise; at sunset there was a gleam of light between the clouds, and at midnight it was clear.

The morning of the 7th was as beautiful as morning could be. Not a cloud was in the sky, and a light breeze tempered the heat. About 9 A. M. we took possession of our grounds. The obliging officers of the college placed a man-servant under our orders, and offered every other assistance we could ask.

The first request we made was that the ground should be kept free of chance visitors; for the fences were very soon picketed with differential variations of humanity, scarcely less annoying because perfectly well-behaved.

No reasoning seemed able to convince the common people in the moon-shaded land that the eclipse belonged to them as much as to the astronomers: they considered it the peculiar property of the telescope. The clearing of our fences was, however, efficiently and kindly done. The President of the College asked the gathering group to withdraw to another field, a compromise which, as it allowed them a near neighborhood, seemed satisfactory.

Our instruments consisted of an equatorially mounted telescope of four inches aperture, by Dolland; a small one of two and a half inches, by the same maker; and a very perfect little instrument of three inches, by Alvan Clark. They must now be examined, and then placed as nearly in meridian as could be done in the little time left. They had come fifteen hundred miles, and we opened the boxes with some anxiety. There was no irremediable injury, but there were slight derangements. The President of the College was at once the errand-boy to go for an instrument-maker. It is almost incredible, but it is true, that an instrument-maker appeared immediately, as if waiting hard by; brought his screw-driver with him, and at once removed the difficulty. Then for the little Clark telescope a post must be put up, and some kind of stand must be arranged for the small Dolland. The first was readily done, and for the second we extemporized a pier by filling a barrel with sand.

Then we must try colored glasses; we must examine clamps; we must test screws; we must adjust focus. The instruments were not such as we had used in our observatory. Large instruments cannot be transported; and astronomers are accustomed to depend on fixed ones. It was as if we had suddenly come into a new field of labor. If we had observed all the solar eclipses in a long life, our experience would not have been great—at most, only a few seconds a year of drill.

The day was comparatively cold; but to stand for hours under an August sun can never be an invigorating process.

Our instruments had no spider lines to mark off different quadrants of the field of view. The moon was expected to appear at a point 122° from the vertex of the sun; we must estimate the position of that point. But one telescope inverted, and the other two had solar eye-pieces of a new construction; and the point would be apparently in another place. We paired off two and two at the telescopes, one to watch the phenomenon through the glass, the other to count time and to make notes; while a seventh was stationed on the top of the College building to watch general effects.

The time at which an eclipse will occur is always calculated by astronomers some years before, and a variation from that calculation in the actual appearance of the phenomenon is a hint that something is wrong.

Not that there is an error in the calculation, for, given certain data with regard to sun, moon, and earth, and the predictions will be unerring. But the data may be wrong; a deviation of computed from observed time is a finger-point to the astronomer; it means something. In preparing for an observation of time, the astronomer gives himself every possible facility. He ascertains to a tenth of a second the condition of his chronometer, not only how fast or how slow it is, but how much that fastness or that slowness varies from hour to hour. He notes exactly the second and part of a second when the expected event should arrive; and a short time before that he places himself at the telescope.

Having no chronograph arrangement with me, I was obliged to depend on the counting of seconds by an assistant. The assistant counts aloud the half-second beats of the chronometer; and the observer, with the eye upon the point to be watched, and the ear intent on the assistant's voice, awaits the event.



At length all was ready. The observers were at the telescopes; the regular count aloud of the half seconds began. Every observer tries to do the impossible. He tries to notice what is technically called "the first contact." He tries to note the exact instant when an unseen spherical body appears to touch a seen spherical body; that is, he tries to see a point infinitesimally small, and to mark a division of time which the ear cannot measure. At a certain second and part of a second, the moon, all unseen, was expected to make itself visible. But the moon was not up to time! There were some seconds of breathless suspense, and then the inky blackness appeared on the burning limb of the sun. All honor to my assistant, whose uniform count on and on, with unwavering voice, steadied my nerves! That for which we had travelled fifteen hundred miles had really come. We watched the movement of the moon's black disk across the less black spots on the sun's disk, and we looked for the peculiarities which other observers of partial eclipses had known. The colored glasses of our telescope were several, arranged on a circular plate, so that we could slip a green one before the eye, change it for a red one or a yellow one, or, if we wished to look with the eye unprotected, a vacant space could be found in the circumference. In the course of the hour, from the beginning of the eclipse to total phase, this was readily done. I fancied that an orange hue suited my eye best, and kept that in place, intending to slip it aside and receive the full light when the darkness came on. As the moon moved on, the crescent sun became a narrower and narrower golden curve of light, and as it seemed to break up into brilliant lines and points, we knew that the total phase was only a few seconds off.

Light clouds had for some time seemed to drift toward the sun; the Mississippi assumed a leaden hue; a sickly green spread over the landscape; Venus shone brightly on one side of the sun, Mercury on the other; Arcturus was gleaming overhead, Saturn was rising in the east; the neighboring cattle began to low; the birds uttered a painful cry; fire-flies twinkled in the foliage, and when the last ray of light was extinguished, a wave of sound came up from the villages below, the mingling of the subdued voices of the multitude.

Instantly the corona burst forth, a glory indeed! It encircled the sun with a soft light, and it sent off streamers for millions of miles into space!

And now it was quick work! To see what could be seen, to make notes, and to mark time, all in less than three minutes, knowing all the time that narrow limitation! The colored glasses, which had slipped so easily when it was unnecessary, at this critical second refused to give place one to the other, and ten seconds must have been lost. I was again indebted to my assistant, who removed the whole of them, giving me free use of the telescope.

On looking through the glass, two rosy prominences were seen on the right of the sun's disk, perhaps one-twentieth of the diameter of the moon, having the shape of the half-blown morning-glory. I found myself continually likening almost all these appearances to flowers, possibly from the exquisite delicacy of the tints. They were not wholly rosy, but of a variegated pink and white, with a mingling of violet.

Any correct observation of color is, however, impossible. Beside the different perception of the eye, in its normal state, the retina cannot instantly lose the effect of the colored glass. I had just left an orange glass, and was quite insensible to that color; while one of our party who had been using a green glass declares the protuberances to be orange-red. Differences of color in the phenomenon are indisputable, and no one could fail to see that the "protuberances" were unlike.

As I ran my glance along the limb of the moon I saw another protuberance, much larger than the former ones, very nearly at the vertex, increasing rapidly. It seemed to be brought into light as the moon moved on; and yet, billowy in shape and mottled in color, it appeared to have, or possibly it had, a motion within itself. Next there leapt out on the left of the moon two more flower-shaped and flower-tinted creations. Twice, as I was looking at these, a flickering light caught my eye, as if from the moon's centre; another strangely shaped figure rushed out as if from behind the moon, and instantly the sun came forth. All nature rejoiced, and much as we needed more time, we rejoiced with Nature, and felt that we loved the light. Our whole party agreed that the darkness was neither that of twilight nor of moonlight, nor was it as great as we had expected. My assistant used a candle in noting time, but cannot say that it was necessary. The observers who had no telescopes, and who undoubtedly saw the most, reported broad bands of light around the horizon, and curious effects of light and shade; for while we were in the shadow, not many miles from us was the partially-lighted region.

With the end of total phase the interest in the eclipse was over, but not the task of the observers. We were to note the "last contact," that is, the last trace of the moon on the sun. How slowly it seemed to come! We had had so much to do in two minutes and forty-eight seconds! We had so little to do in the next hour!

We were all curious to hear from the other observers. Each party met us with radiant faces.

"How went the photography?" we asked.

"Forty-one successful pictures—six during totality," was the answer.

"And the other observations with the spectroscope?"

"Very successful."

"And did you see an inter-Mercurial planet?"

"No."

No one person can give an account of this eclipse, but the specialty of each is the bit of mosaic which he contributes to the whole, and the record will be such as science never made before. The astronomer and the photographer who worked together could have seen almost nothing of general effects; the attention given to rosy protuberances was taken from corona; the glance which was sent along far-stretching streamers could not be upon bursting flames.

The photographic pictures, accompanied as they were at Burlington with chronographic records, will be of value even as measurements of precision, and the spectroscope showed itself capable of noting "first contact." For physical investigations these two instruments are beyond all others, for the sun tells its own story through them, and the narrative can be read and interpreted at leisure.

The physicist tells us that the "rosy prominences" are incandescent hydrogen, not revealed by eclipses particularly, but recognized in full sunlight. What is the law of distribution of these flames? Is it any easier to account for them than to account for the light and heat of the sun itself?

Then what is the corona? If it is the atmosphere of the sun, why those immense streamers? If it is connected with the auro-ra, as was suggested at the Scientific Association in Salem, is it more than a change of name?

What has become of the inter-Mercurial planet which Mr. Lesbarcault saw cross the sun's disc in 1859, and whose orbit Leverrier calculated? In all the ten years of watching the sun since that time, where has it hidden itself?

I will ask another question. Piazzi Smyth says: "The effect of a total eclipse on the minds of men is so overpowering, that if they have never seen it before they forget their appointed tasks, and will look around during the few seconds of total obscuration, to witness the scene." Other astronomers have said the same. My assistants, a party of young students, would not have turned from the narrow line of observation assigned to them if the earth had quaked beneath them. They would have said

"by the storms of circumstance unshaken,  
And subject neither to eclipse nor wane,  
Duty exists."

Was it because they were women?

## OCTOBER 30, 1869.

### Observed 100th Anniversary of Maria Mitchell's Discovery.

On a clear, cool night in the early fall, just one hundred years ago, a young Nantucket woman climbed up a short flight of attic steps, opened a wide scuttle and stepped out onto the roof of the Pacific Bank. She carefully closed the scuttle behind her and, advancing to where a telescope was mounted on a short tripod, began searching the northern sky with slow, patient pace.

The young woman was Maria Mitchell, daughter of William Mitchell, the cashier of the Bank, (a man of definite scientific achievements) and before she would return to her room in the apartment below, she was to discover a comet and become famed throughout the world as the first of her sex to accomplish this feat.

On Wednesday evening, October 1, just one hundred years later, an anniversary observance was held at the group of buildings on Vestal street which have been dedicated to the memory of this Nantucketer by the Maria Mitchell Association. Nearly one hundred interested people attended the observance, which was under the direction of Miss Margaret Harwood, assisted by Mrs. Molly Norcross, the librarian.

Miss Harwood, who has been the Director of the Observatory since 1916, had a well-adapted program for her listeners. First, she told the story of Maria Mitchell—whose birthplace, across the way, is one of the Association's prized possessions—and of her discovery of the comet and her illustrious career which followed, including her years as the first Professor of Astronomy at Vassar College.

In the Library building, there were on exhibition many unusual related items of the Mitchell family. Of course, the gold medal which Maria received from the King of Denmark for having discovered her comet was on display, being shown by William C. Brock. Also shown was the little Dolland 3-inch telescope which she used on that memorable evening, and the notebook in which her father, William Mitchell, proudly recorded:

"10 mo. 1, 1847—This evening, at half past ten, Maria discovered a telescopic comet five degrees above Polaris. Persuaded that no nebula could occupy that position unnoticed, it scarcely needed the evidence of motion to give it the character of a comet."

On October 3rd, DaVico, of Rome, discovered this comet, and on the 11th Prof. Runkel, of Hamburg, sighted it—each discovery, of course, being made without possible knowledge of Maria Mitchell's prior knowledge of it. Mr. Mitchell recorded on the 3rd:

"... Maria will not consent to have it announced as an original discovery, but I have written my friend Bon [at Harvard College Observatory] to ascertain whether it is one that somebody else has caught."

Miss Harwood gave a most interesting account of the events subsequent to Maria's discovery. Her father immediately communicated the fact to scientists and astronomers in the outside world, but it was not until many months later that the priority of his daughter's claim of discovery was completely substantiated. The mails from Europe were slow, but proof was eventually forthcoming.

Night after night, whenever the skies were clear, Maria Mitchell recorded the progress of her comet. On October 5, the Mitchells—father and daughter, saw the comet "occult," or pass in front of a star, which William Mitchell recorded as "a very interesting phenomenon. The brightness of the star seemed not in the least diminished, though the center passed within a second of the star."

Following the showing of a number of lantern slides, the visitors were invited across the way to the observatory, where many took advantage of the opportunity to look through the large telescope, which was operated by Alvin Paddock, the telescope presented to Miss Mitchell by the women of America in 1859, and the 3-inch Dolland used by Miss Mitchell when she discovered the comet. Francis Perry assisted Mr. Paddock.

The Maria Mitchell Association was founded in 1902, and first acquired her birthplace at 1 Vestal street. An observatory was built a few years later, and the library building (which was originally William Mitchell's schoolhouse) fitted out for the Natural Science Department.

Miss Harwood, who has been a Maria Mitchell Fellow since 1912, and Director since 1916, has done a notable job in her scientific observations and research at the Observatory next to her little home. Not content with her laurels, she taught at M. I. T. during the war, conducting classes in navigation, as well. It may be truthfully said that no one works more fully in the spirit of Maria Mitchell.

Oct. 4, 1947



## Maria Mitchell.

ONLY WOMAN WHOSE NAME  
WILL BE CARVED IN HALL  
OF FAME.

(SPECIALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE TIMES)  
Every loyal "daughter of Vassar  
dear," however remote from her Alma  
Mater, heard with delight the recent  
announcement that Marie Mitchell had  
been chosen to receive a tablet in the  
Hall of Fame at New York University.  
This great woman was the only Amer-

qualities of mind and heart could be  
read."

Miss Mitchell and her father were  
ever the closest comrades. During her  
visit to Europe in 1857-58, she wrote  
him in one of her letters how she had  
gone with Ekeke, the distinguished  
astronomer, to see the wedding gifts  
presented by the cities of Germany to  
the Princess Royal of England upon  
her marriage to the Crown Prince of  
Prussia.

"The presents were in two rooms,"  
she wrote, "ticketed and numbered  
and a catalogue of them sold. All  
the manufacturing companies availed  
themselves of the opportunity to ad-

She once did spy a comet and thus  
was known to fame.  
Good woman that she am.

She leads us through the mazes of her  
astronomy.  
She teaches us Nutation and the laws  
of Kepler three.  
Th' inclination of their orbits and their  
eccentricity.

Good woman that she be.

In the cause of woman's suff(e)rage  
she shineth as a star.  
And as President of Congress she is  
known from near and far.  
For her executive 'bility and for her  
silver ha'r,



Vassar College, Observatory at  
the right



Maria Mitchell

Good woman that she are.

Though as strong as Rocky Mountains,  
she is gentle as a lamb,  
And in her ways and manners she is  
peaceable and calm,  
And our mental perturbations she  
sootheth like a balm.

Good woman that she am.

Sing her praises, sing her praises, good  
woman that she is,  
For to give us joy and welcome, her  
chiefest pleasure 'tis;  
Let her name be sung forever, till  
through space her praises whiz,

Good woman that she is.

ELTHEA EMBODY.

Prof. Maria Mitchell and Miss Whitney, the present president

ican scientist to be elected at the sec-  
ond quinquennial election which was  
held last October.

The announcement stated that "a  
curious commentary on Marie Mit-  
chell's election is the fact that eight  
of the electors, chiefly scientists, re-  
fused to vote for any woman, thus re-  
ducing the number of votes necessary  
to elect a woman to forty-seven, while  
fifty-one were required for a man."

In this age of broad-mindedness and  
enlightenment, one can scarcely imagine  
eight men, "mostly scientists," so thor-  
oughly prejudiced against everything  
feminine as to ignore the magnificent  
scientific achievements of Prof. Mit-  
chell, simply because she was a wom-  
an. These benighted men have yet to  
learn that in the world of intellect  
there is no sex.

It was by years of determined study,  
and unremitting attention to the little  
duties about her, that Maria Mitchell  
attained her high position among  
astronomers. Her early life was spent  
at her home at Nantucket, where her  
father had built himself an observa-  
tory on his own land. Here, under  
heavy difficulties, the old astronomer  
pursued his studies of the heavens and  
was paid \$100 annually for services  
rendered the United States Coast Sur-  
vey.

Beginning at the age of seventeen  
years, Miss Mitchell served as librar-  
ian of the Nantucket Athenaeum for  
eighteen long years, receiving \$60 for  
her first year's services, \$75 the second  
year, and \$100 for each succeeding  
year. By strictest economy she was  
enabled to save part of her meager  
salary for future use. All this time  
she was assisting her father in his  
astronomical work and helping her  
mother with the household duties, her  
part being an endless "washing of  
dishes," as she expressed it.

Mr. Mitchell, like the father of Eliza-  
beth Barrett-Browning, made no dis-  
tinction in the education of his sons  
and daughters; they were sent to the  
same school and instructed in the  
same branches of learning.

Miss Mitchell was nearly forty years  
of age when her brilliant black eyes  
"spied the comet" which made her  
famous. Newcomb describes the great  
comet as "one of the most magnificent  
of modern times, which hung in the  
western sky during the autumn of 1858  
and will be well remembered by all  
who were then old enough to notice it.  
It was first seen at Florence on June 2,  
1858, by Donati, who described it as  
a very faint nebula, but 3 feet in  
diameter. About the end of the month  
it was discovered independently by  
three American observers, among  
them Miss Marie Mitchell of Nantuc-  
ket."

The piercing keenness of Miss Mit-  
chell's eyes, for which she was always  
noticeable, must have been inherited  
from her mother; her father, in his  
unpublished autobiography, says of his  
wife, "her eyes were her commanding  
feature. It was in these her great

190



vertise their commodities, I suppose, as she had presents of all kinds. What she will do with sixty albums I can't see, but I can understand the use of two clothes-lines, because she can lend one to her mother, who must have a large Monday's wash."

This letter of other days reminds us of the strange wedding gifts that have been showered upon Alice Roosevelt with such generous profusion.

In 1866 Miss Mitchell was appointed professor of astronomy at Vassar College, to which place her father removed, her mother having died six years before. Mr. Mitchell's death occurred in 1870.

The great number of girls whose privilege it was to be instructed by this noble woman will never forget her kindness and helpfulness to them while within the sheltering college walls.

One of the less studious maidens, who had observed that Miss Mitchell always followed a regular routine in calling upon members of her class, remembers how a judicious changing of her seat in the classroom enabled her to escape from reciting for almost a fatal length of time—fatal to passing in astronomy.

The girls who were invited to the "dome" parties might consider themselves favored, for these events were rare and most exclusive. The observatory is of red brick. On the first floor is the classroom; on the second floor was Miss Mitchell's sitting room, to which a high flight of stone steps led. Here among numerous books and pictures was a bust of Mrs. Somerville, the famous English mathematician and geographer. The observatory proper is located above this sitting room.

Prof. Mitchell was an ardent admirer of kittens. During the winter that Matthew Arnold visited this country, he lectured to the students at Vassar. Just at that time Prof. Mitchell was looking for names to give a family of four tiny kittens. Evidently thinking nothing too good for her pets, she named one Matthew Arnold for the distinguished Englishman, and the others she called Herbert Spencer, J. G. Whittier and C. Darwin. Then she presented two of them to favorite teachers, and was honestly grieved upon hearing that one of them, little Herbert, did not survive a week.

For many years prior to her death, which occurred in 1889, Miss Mitchell was assisted by Miss Whitney, who succeeded her as head of the department of astronomy and who still holds that position.

The following college song, composed many years ago by a number of the students, needs no explanation of how it came into being or why it finds a place in the Vassar Song Book:

GOOD WOMAN THAT SHE AM.

Air: "John Brown."

We are singing for the glory of Maria Mitchell's name,  
She lives at Vassar College, and you all know the same.

5

1905



### The "Dome Party" at Vassar College.

Once, during a visit at Vassar College, in the lovely month of June, I noticed an air of festivity in the little building devoted to the astronomical department. Although astronomers have a custom of sitting up all night, it was evident that something more unusual and even livelier had happened. The pretty recitation-room held odd groups of chairs; Professor Maria Mitchell was a little fatigued, though as witty as ever, and Professor Whitney, who has since taken Professor Mitchell's place, had a manner of pleasant reminiscence, as if she enjoyed "talking things over." I soon learned that a "Dome Party" had been held the day before, given to the junior and senior members of the astronomy department by the professors. All who had been fortunate enough to be present were glad to tell how they had been the most envied of mortals.

For several days before the party, an air of preparation had hovered over the Observatory. The guests had been invited to contribute poetical morsels for a feast of original verse, and the professors had had the rapt air of poets. At half-past eight on the eventful morning, juniors and seniors, with faces as bright as the June sunshine, walked eagerly to the Observatory. There they were welcomed warmly by Professor Mitchell and Miss Whitney, who invited the guests promptly to a breakfast in the dome and the meridian-room. At first there was a hush. The religious dimness of the dome, the fact that the great telescope was over their heads, and the presence of the distinguished and good woman who was the honored hostess and professor, gave a strangeness to the social festival. But a look at the dainty tables soon dispelled all restraint, and the girls' subdued tones grew louder and more confident, while many merry laughs echoed under the vaulted roof. At the plate of each girl was a bouquet of fresh June roses from Professor Mitchell's garden. How often had the girls proved the beauty of the garden's flowers and the generosity of the giver! Once, when the complaint had come that flowers had been picked in the college gardens, and the students had been reproved, Professor Mitchell had come with a warm-hearted invitation: "My apple tree is in bloom, girls. Take all the blossoms that you want." These roses, souvenirs of a delightful occasion, would be held more precious than all the college flowers, and would be kept for years in love of her who gave them. Besides the roses, there were strawberries and many delicious viands, well relished by the groups of girls at the little tables.

When the breakfast was finished, Professor Mitchell made a little speech in which she said that a literary feast would follow. Then, amid good humored laughter, each student heard herself praised in poems written by her beloved professors. There were epigrammatic sonnets on those whose names would rhyme, and bright essays on those whose names could not be put in verse by any possibility of twisting and turning. Music varied the poetry, as a choir, seated on the steps by the great telescope, sang songs written for the occasion, and made the dome resound with selections on many kinds of musical instruments.

Sept. 30, 1893

For the Inquirer and Mirror.

Mr. Editors:

Since the decease of Maria Mitchell, which occurred June 28, 1889, the press has teemed with mortuary eulogies of her work as a public woman and as an astronomer. Her many friends and relatives on the island of Nantucket, which we are proud to call the place of her nativity, have naturally been gratified to read these appreciative communications.

While her influence was widely felt in promoting intellectual progress generally, she was more especially solicitous to elevate young women by helping them to a "higher education." This interest was not confined to those under her tutelage at Vassar College, in which, for twenty-five years she filled the chair as professor of Astronomy; but outside of that noble institution, wherever she heard of a young girl student struggling to overcome obstacles in the path of learning, there her hand was stretched out to help.

Duty was her pole-star. Her voice, pen and purse were all brought under contribution in the line of educational work. And how many a well-to-do girl, in imminent danger of being lured into a life of frivolity, with all its attendant evils, must look back with grateful remembrance to the saving power of Miss Mitchell's observatory! There was engendered that inspiring enthusiasm which led them to slake their native thirst for excitement at the fountain of knowledge. This draught enhanced the pleasure as well as the usefulness of their lives through all subsequent years.

There was a side of Maria Mitchell's character of which there has been no adequate recognition in the multiplied details of her career which have appeared in the papers—an attribute of love and tenderness, felt by all who knew her most intimately—a heart quality which made it an inestimable privilege to be counted among her personal friends. These understood the warmth and depth of her affectional nature. Her whole-souled generosity and self-forgetfulness seemed to them something wonderful! She possessed a genius for that higher order of friendship of which only great souls are capable. Her personal friends, as well as her relatives near and dear, held her in so high regard and so keenly feel their loss, that they deem it a privilege to pay due homage to the union of learning and benevolence which caused the deceased to become so marked a character. But let us trust that Death, by relieving her of the infirmities which prematurely cut short her active career in this world, will open up to her greater opportunities for service—for cosmic investigation in the clearer light which shines in realms beyond our mortal ken. Her last days were very peaceful and happy. Fully realizing that her end was near, she calmly awaited the approach of death as a blessed angel of relief. Though her lips were dumb, her spirit seemed to say in complete resignation:

"I wait,  
Till in white death's tranquility  
Shall softly fall away from me  
This weary life's infinity;  
That I in larger light, may learn  
The larger truth I would discern,  
The larger love for which I yearn."

A. G.

### LECTURE on the SUN.

THE TRUSTEES OF THE

### ATHENEUM

TAKE pleasure in announcing that Prof. MARIA MITCHELL will deliver a Lecture on

### THE SUN.

at Atheneum Hall, on Thursday evening, April 14th, commencing at half past 7 o'clock. Doors open at 7. Miss Mitchell has consented to give this lecture for the benefit of the Atheneum.

Tickets 25 cents. For sale at the stores of Mary F. Coleman and Charles H. Jagger, and at the door, Per order, ALFRED MACY, President.

April 9, 1870

### THE MEMORY OF MARIA MITCHELL.

HONORED BY PROVIDENCE HIGH SCHOOL.

GIRLS.—At the Arbor Day exercises of the Providence Public schools, the graduating class of the girls' department in the high school, dedicated their tree to Maria Mitchell. An excellent essay, containing an accurate sketch of this great woman's life, was read by the class president, Miss Alice F. Tourtellot. The following dedication was given by the class:

"We dedicate this tree to Maria Mitchell, a woman whose life is not to be measured by the worth of mere work done by brain or figures. It is not that she penetrated the nebulae, found the dark companions of great stars, weighed the sun, and was the familiar of comets, so much as that the effect of her character and deeds, of her thoughts and aspirations extended and will extend through generations of girls, not merely with the tradition of a great name, but with living, actual influence, still broadening when she is dust, till its last ripple breaks on the shores of eternity itself."

May 10, 1890

MARIA MITCHELL'S WILL.—The will of Maria Mitchell, the celebrated astronomer, whose death occurred at Lynn some weeks ago, was proven in the Probate Court in Salem, Monday. Her bequests, which relate to things of general interest, are as follows:

The gold medal given to the deceased by the King of Denmark, to Lydia Mitchell Dame, of Lynn, and on her decease to the eldest daughter of the sister of the testator, Eliza Catherine Dame. The composition medal from the Republic of San Marino is given to Frances Mitchell Macy of Nantucket. The diamond ring, the California ring, and all other rings belonging to Miss Mitchell are bequeathed to Frances Mitchell Macy of Nantucket. All her scientific books are left to Henry Mitchell of Brookline, Mass. All her manuscripts are bequeathed to Phebe Mitchell Kendall of Cambridge. To William Mitchell Barney of Lynn, Clifford Mitchell of Chicago, and William Mitchell Kendall of Cambridgeport she leaves her five-inch telescope, and also her telescope known as the "Comet Sweeper." She also bequeathed one undivided eighth part of the rest and residue of her estate to Vassar College, the interest and income to be devoted to furnishing education to any needy student who may require aid. The bequest is to found a fund to be known as the "William Mitchell Aid." By a codicil it is stipulated that this bequest shall not exceed \$1000. Her library is to be divided between Prof. Henry Mitchell, of Brookline, and Mrs. A. R. Dame, of Brooklyn. Her house in Lynn she leaves to her five oldest nieces and nephews, viz: Annie M. Payne, Frances M. Macy, Lydia M. Dame, Clifford Mitchell, and W. M. Barney. All the rest and residue of her estate is left to her brothers and sisters, share and share alike. The original will is dated Nov. 28, 1877. Alfred Macy of Nantucket is the executor named.

Prof. Maria Mitchell, of Vassar College, sends us the following extract from Nature:

"Now that the identity of the great comet of the present year (seen in South America) with that which excited such unusual interest in almost all parts of the globe in March, 1843, is pretty well established, it is not without interest to recall the circumstances under which the comet made its appearance in 1843.

The first definite observation of the head of this comet, and the only one previous to Perihelion passage, was claimed to have been made by Capt. Ray, and is described in a letter from Mr. Mitchell, of Nantucket, to Prof. Pierce, the well-known American geometer. Capt. Ray is said to have been 'a man of sound judgment, a very accurate observer, and a correct man. He says he saw the comet at Conception, S. A., at 11 A. M., Feb. 27, 1843; the comet's distance from the sun was only 1.6 of the sun's diameter."

This comet was seen in southern latitudes when it returned this year. It passed its perihelion January 27.

May 24, 1880

At the close of a delightful morning came the "Maria Mitchell" song, famous among all Vassar students, ending with the refrain, "Good Woman that She Is!" Although the "Dome Party" still remains a bright festival at the close of the college year, the gracious presence of Maria Mitchell no longer is the inspiring force of the happy day.

The "Dome Party" was called the "Mecca" of the Vassar student in astronomy.—[July St. Nicholas.

Sept 30, 1893

We have received from Maria Mitchell, of Vassar College, an order for printing a scientific pamphlet, which has necessitated the purchase of a new font of type. We feel a little proud to think that our work is done in such superior style as to attract the attention of friends abroad and prompt them to send us orders.

Feb 10, 1877

### Written by Maria Mitchell.

The following poem was written by Maria Mitchell in 1844 and published with a collection of other poems in a little booklet entitled "Seaweeds From the Shores of Nantucket":

### AN OLD STORY.

Before Columbus ever thought  
Of Western World with glory fraught;  
Before the Northmen had been known  
To wander from their native zone;  
Before was raised a single mound,  
The antiquarians to confound;  
Indeed, so very long ago—  
The time one can't exactly know—  
A giant Sachem, good as great,  
Reigned in and over our Bay State.  
So huge was he, his realm so small,  
He could not exercise at all,  
Except by taking to the sea,  
(For which he had a ticket free,  
Granted by Neptune, with the seal,  
A salient clam, and couchant eel).  
His pipe was many a mile in length,  
His lungs proportionable in strength;  
And his rich moccasins—with the pair  
The seven-league boots would not compare.  
Whene'er siestas he would take,  
Cape Cod must help his couch to make;  
And, being lowly, it was meet  
He should prefer it for his feet.  
Well, one day, after quite a doze,  
A month or two in length suppose,  
He waked, and, as he'd often done,  
Strolled forth to see the mid-day sun;  
But while unconsciously he slept,  
The sand within his moccasins crept;  
At every step some pain he'd feel;  
'Twas now the toe, now near the heel;  
At length his Sachemship grew cross,  
The pebbles to the sea he'd toss;  
And with a moccasin in each hand,  
He threw on either side the sand;  
Then, in an instant there appear  
Two little isles the Sachem near;  
One as the Vineyard now is known,  
The other we may call our own.  
At ease, he freely breathed awhile,  
Which sent the fogs to bless our isle;  
And turning east, with quickened motion,  
The chill, bleak winds came o'er the ocean.  
Ill-judging Sachem! would that you  
Had never shaken here that shoe;  
Or, having done so, would again,  
And join Nantucket to the main!

May 6, 1911

Maria Mitchell by her will left one thousand dollars to Vassar College "to help some worthy student." The remainder of her property, which was considerable, was divided among her brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews. Of the nieces, one, Miss Dame, has been assistant principal of the Washington High School; one, Miss May Dame, is on the staff of the experts on the Century dictionary; another, Miss Macy, is an artist, and still another, Mrs. Hayne, is the editor of a New York weekly paper.—N. Y. Home Journal.

Oct 5, 1899



### Sonnet to Maria Mitchell.

A revision of the sonnet written by Miss L. M. Gardner and read at the dedication of the Maria Mitchell Memorial last week, appears below:

'Twas here, O watcher of the evening sky,  
While distant echoes over moor and sea  
In undertone of rhythm came to thee,  
And ever with you starlit, gleaming eye  
The heavens beckoned thee as night drew  
nigh.

Here, while thou traced the silent mystery  
On azure scroll, thy soul's intensity  
Did wisdom find and hear her prophesy.  
Thy spirit knew no bounds, for unto thee  
This message was revealed:—that when one  
star

Is quenched on high, for ages does its light  
Shine on; so now o'er path of memory  
Thy gracious radiance steadfast and afar  
Will lead us ever on to noblest height.  
L. M. Gardner.

July 25, 1909

### Memoria in Aeterna.

#### MARIA MITCHELL.

Poetic justice, that on Vestal street  
We find her birthplace, and that loving  
homage due

Be paid the great astronomer! 'Tis meet  
For one so honored by the Old world and  
the New!

Like Vesta's altar, glowing with its fire  
Perpetually burning to the goddess'  
name,

Behold a shrine now reared with purpose  
higher,  
Encircled with a light transcending mys-  
tic flame!

Fair Science crowned her, when with pre-  
science rare,  
She first foretold the comet's advent by  
her gaze;

Queen in her right, of all th' nebulous air,  
While the wide world's astronomers  
stood in amaze!

She, to whose honor we now dedicate  
Memorial so grand, won fame's pure cor-  
onet;

Her name is written here. Love guards  
the gate;  
Nantucket treasures her, and never shall  
forget.

Maria Mitchell. Vassar's classic hall  
Was hallowed by her presence; whence  
with reverence went

Fond pupils, who, devoted learners all,  
Like the six vestals, e'er shall watch this  
monument;

The stars she loved, keep nightly vigils, and  
Shall cluster here, long as this graceful  
dome shall stand!

ARTHUR ELWELL JENES.

1908

### Miss Mitchell's Portrait.

Visitors to our Athenaeum the past week have been exceedingly interested in the portrait of the late Prof. Maria Mitchell, which was hung in position last Monday evening. The portrait, a fine piece of work by E. T. Billings, a well-known artist of Boston, is a wonderfully good likeness. The combination of strength and beauty in the face is very noticeable. The picture was formally presented to the trustees of the library at their last quarterly meeting, by the committee, with a fund of nearly \$500 for books.

The committee are to be congratulated on their success, and it remains for time to form a perspective which will cause Nantucket to glow with ever-increasing pride as the birth-place of this noted astronomer.

July 18, 1891

### She was Known.

Here is a story told of Professor Maria Mitchell. After Professor Mitchell resigned from Vassar college she went to live in Philadelphia. Two of her old pupils residing in the Quaker City determined to call upon their former professor immediately. On the way to the hotel where Miss Mitchell was staying, the two ladies debated

with themselves in what form it would be better to put their inquiry. If they asked for Professor Mitchell, the clerk, not having had the superlative advantages of Vassar, would probably say that there was no such gentleman in the house. On the other hand, how could they so lower the dignity of their dearly beloved professor by inquiring if Miss Mitchell was at home?

The question was a stupendous one, and after being argued pro and con, it was finally decided in favor of the miss. The ignorance of the clerk was a fact, and not to be gainsaid. Accordingly, the ladies on reaching the hotel walked up to the man at the desk and inquired for Miss Mitchell. Much to their consternation they were told that there was no such person in the house.

"I am sure she is here," said the lady.

"Pardon me, madame," replied the urbane clerk, "perhaps you have made a mistake; your friend may be stopping at some other hotel."

"No, she is here," and forthwith was given a most accurate description of the distinguished lady. Light began to dawn in the mind of the puzzled young man.

"I beg your pardon; you mean Professor Mitchell. Certainly, she is staying with us. Your cards?"—[*New York Advertiser.*]

1891

We copy the following from the *New Bedford Mercury*:—

A LADY ASTRONOMER.—Miss Mitchell, of Nantucket, has computed the elements of the orbit of the comet discovered by her on the first of last October; and her results, with those of Professor Pierce and of Mr. Bond, together with a notice of the central passage of the comet over a bright fixed star in the constellation of the Dragon, and of other interesting phenomena in connection with the same, will be prepared by William Mitchell, Esq., the father of the lady by whom the wanderer was first seen, and will appear in the *American Journal of Science*.

Dec. 25, 1847

### Tablet to Maria Mitchell.

The Nantucket Maria Mitchell association was represented by three members at the unveiling on Memorial Day of a tablet to Maria Mitchell in the hall of fame at New York university. Professor Mary W. Whitney of Vassar, president of the association, delivered the address. Associated with her were Mrs. Benjamin Albertson of Philadelphia, curator of the Maria Mitchell house at Nantucket, and Mrs. Charles S. Hinchman of Philadelphia, vice-presidents of the association.

June 1, 1907

MERITED COMPLIMENT.—In reading the July number of Emerson's *U. S. Magazine*, we came across the following article in reference to a talented Nantucket lady, which it affords us genuine pleasure to transfer to our columns, that our readers may know the high estimation in which their distinguished towns-woman is held abroad:

#### Maria Mitchell.

A Boston friend writes us that the ladies of that city have it in contemplation to start a subscription paper for the purpose of raising three thousand dollars, to purchase a telescope for this distinguished and truly noble woman, who has devoted herself with so much zeal to the pursuit of science. This sum will purchase an instrument much larger than the one now owned by Miss Mitchell, and will thus greatly facilitate her in her studies.

We sincerely hope something of this kind will be done, and it will be a most womanly tribute to one of the most gifted and deserving of her sex. In Europe, Maria Mitchell would command the interest and receive the homage of the learned and polite, in the most accomplished circles, while in America so little prestige is attached to genius or learning, that she is comparatively unknown. This is a great fault in our social aspect, and one which excites the animadversion of foreigners at once. "Where are your distinguished women—where your learned men?" they ask as they are invited into our ostentatiously furnished houses to find a group of giggling girls and boys, or commonplace men and women, who do nothing but dance, or yawn about till supper is announced. We need a reform here, most especially, if we would not see American society utterly contemptible.

In relation to our countrywoman, Maria Mitchell, of whom we have before spoken in the *United States Magazine*, we will receive and send to their destination any sums left for the above purpose at this office.

Miss Mitchell recently returned from a Western tour of several weeks, the public journals everywhere noticing her visits in very complimentary language. We hear that Miss M. will leave for Europe in the steamer of the 22d inst., remaining abroad a year or two to prosecute her scientific investigations. We wish her a pleasant tour, while we feel certain it will prove an intellectually profitable one, and beneficial to the cause of science by her intelligent study and close observation.

July 1, 1857

MARIA MITCHELL.—A Boston friend writes us that the ladies of that city have it in contemplation to start a subscription paper for the purpose of raising three hundred dollars, to purchase a telescope for this distinguished and truly noble woman, who has devoted herself with so much zeal to the pursuit of science. This sum will purchase an instrument much larger than the one now owned by Miss Mitchell, and will thus greatly facilitate her in her studies.

We sincerely hope something of this kind will be done, and it will be a most womanly tribute to one of the most gifted and deserving of her sex. In Europe, Maria Mitchell would command the interest and receive the homage of the learned and polite, in the most accomplished circles, while in America, so little prestige is attached to genius or learning, that she is comparatively unknown. This is a great fault in our social aspect, and one which excites the animadversion of foreigners at once. "Where are your distinguished women—where your learned men?" they ask as they are invited into our ostentatiously furnished houses to find a group of giggling girls and boys, or commonplace men and women, who do nothing but dance, or yawn about till supper is announced. We need a reform here, most especially, if we would not see American society utterly contemptible.

In relation to our countrywoman, Maria Mitchell, of whom we have before spoken in the *United States Magazine*, we will receive and send to their destination any sums left for the above purpose at this office.—*Emerson's U. S. Magazine, for July.*

July 10, 1857

### Testimonial to a Nantucket Lady.

We find the following paragraph in the *Boston Herald*, and will only add the sincere hope that the movement may be entirely successful:—

TESTIMONIAL TO A LADY ASTRONOMER.—Preparations are making to procure a testimonial for Miss Maria Mitchell of Nantucket, the celebrated female astronomer, who is now absent in Europe, visiting the celebrated observatories and astronomers of the old world. The movement in New England has been auspiciously inaugurated by liberal contributions from John Carter Brown of Providence, Edward Everett, J. Ingersoll Bowditch, Francis Peabody of Salem, and other munificent patrons of science. It is thought that if a sum sufficient is raised, the present to her will be the "Sharon Observatory," so called. Of the \$3000 required for its purchase, more than one-third has been pledged by ladies in or near Philadelphia, to whom the Observatory in question is well known—and it is hoped the rest may be obtained in New England without difficulty.

Rev. Dr. Edward B. Hall of Providence, who has taken a leading part in this object, in a letter to a friend which we find quoted in the *Salem Register*, briefly sketches an outline of this plan, as follows:—

"Miss Maria Mitchell, of Nantucket, in connection with her father, is known to have contributed important aid for several years to the *Nautical Almanac* and the *Coast Survey*, through her astronomical observations. But she is working to great disadvantage from the limitation and imperfection of the instruments at their command. An unusual opportunity is now offered of purchasing the "Sharon Observatory," so called, and the friends of Miss Mitchell wish to present it to her as a mark of personal regard, and for the better prosecution of her scientific pursuits."

Dr. Hall adds that whatever is done must be done at once, as there are several purchasers ready to take the Observatory, and Miss M.'s friends have the refusal only to the first of September.

Prof. Bond of Harvard College endorses the presentation as a well deserved compliment, and after noticing the instruments particularly as described by Prof. Loomis that "they constitute such a collection of instruments as Miss Mitchell would be delighted to possess," he adds:—

"I would remark that the island of Nantucket enjoys some peculiar advantages as a site for an Astronomical Observatory, in its being less subject to those rapid and excessive thermometric disturbances which so frequently render the clearest atmosphere on the continent unavailable for nice observation of the heavenly bodies. Mr. Mitchell's residence at Nantucket has for several years past been one of the United States Coast Survey Stations, under the charge of Mr. M., assisted by his daughter Maria, and consequently there has been accumulated as large an amount of data for the determination of its position, as its limited instrumental means would permit—these, combined with the earlier observations of the Hon. Walter Folger, form a valuable series upon which future operations may be safely based."

I look upon the already large collection of astronomical observations made at Nantucket, its connection with the Coast Survey, its proximity to some of the most dangerous and most frequented channels of navigation, its constituting, as it does, one of the termini of an arc of the meridian for ascertaining the figure of the Earth—as pointing to this island as being one of the most appropriate positions on our whole seaboard for the establishment of an Observatory; and the well known zeal, industry and talent of Miss Mitchell, aided by the experience of her father, as insuring the most valuable results from the instruments, if placed at her disposal."

Aug. 17, 1957



# Fifty Famous Nantucketers.

By Grace Brown Gardner.

31.

MARIA MITCHELL

1818—1889



MARIA MITCHELL

She was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the first woman on its rolls, and to various other scientific societies. Honorary degrees were conferred upon her. She was made computer of tables for the Nautical Almanac. In 1857 she visited Europe and was received with honors at the observatories of that time.

In 1865 she was appointed Professor of Astronomy at Vassar College, and after a distinguished career of twenty-three years she was appointed Professor Emeritus.

People interested in the life of Maria Mitchell will do well to read the recently published "Sweeper in the Sky" by Helen Wright. Nearly half of the book is devoted to Maria Mitchell's life in Nantucket. It describes her as a child in a Quaker home; as a school girl coming under the influence of the Rev. Cyrus Peirce who later became the first principal of the first state normal school in America; as the young woman who was the first librarian of the Nantucket Atheneum; and finally as the mathematician, astronomer and discoverer of the comet which brought lasting fame to her name.

William Mitchell, the father of Maria, was the owner of a reflecting telescope and other astronomical apparatus. It was the custom of Nantucket whaling captains to take their chronometers to him to be "rated". His daughter became interested in his work when very young, and at the age of twelve was entrusted with the duty of counting seconds for her father's observation of the total eclipse of the sun in 1831. Maria always referred to this as one of the proudest occasions of her life. Her interest in the stars continued, and she assisted her father in his observatory on the walk on the roof of the family home on Vestal street.

In 1837, her father became the cashier of the Pacific Bank and the family moved to the apartment over the banking rooms on Main Street.

An observatory was built on the roof of the bank. Here Maria Mitchell made the discovery of the telescopic comet for which she was awarded a gold medal by the King of Denmark. Her international reputation as an astronomer was made by this discovery and her future life was a series of achievements and honors.

Her name of placed on the frieze of the Boston Public Library naming those prominent in Art, Science and Literature. A great honor was paid to her memory in 1907 when a tablet was unveiled in the Hall of Fame in New York University.

During her twenty years as librarian of the Atheneum her contribution to island life was noteworthy. Always interested in the young she guided them in their choice of reading and encouraged them in their ambitions. The girls went to her for sympathy and advice, and the boys on their return from sea visited her and discussed their adventures. Her scientific acquaintances were widespread and many were the notable people that she was instrumental in bringing to the lecture courses sponsored by the Atheneum. Emerson, Channing, Horace Greeley, Thoreau, Lucy Stone, Agassiz and Audubon were among the speakers, some of whom climbed "up scuttle" and visited the observatory on the roof of the bank.

The Great Fire of 1846 occurred during her term as librarian, when the Atheneum was reduced to a mass of smouldering ruins and its library utterly destroyed. In this crisis she was invaluable. Within less than a year a new Atheneum similar to the old arose, with its shelves filled with volumes and sets of volumes given by individuals, by publishers, by libraries, by organizations and by scientific societies. In collecting these books the proprietors were much indebted to the labors of Maria Mitchell in contacting possible donors among her many acquaintances.

June 10, 1950



In 1902, the birthplace of Maria Mitchell (right) on Vestal street was purchased and the Maria Mitchell Association founded. In addition to the astronomical and other scientific work carried on there, the birthplace of the famous astronomer has become mecca for hundreds of visitors.

HONORED WITH A RECEPTION.—Miss Maria Mitchell, of Vassar College, was last week tendered a brilliant reception at the Grand Central Hotel, Denver, Col., by the Equal Rights League of that city, in honor of her 60th birthday.

1878



### Maria Mitchell Memorial.

At the recent annual meeting of the proprietors of the Athenaeum, a motion was introduced of so general interest that we give it entire, feeling confident that its purpose will appeal strongly to the pride and liberality of each one of the wide circle of readers of the Nantucket papers. The motion is as follows:

Because Nantucket is the birthplace of the late Maria Mitchell, professor of Astronomy in Vassar College; because Professor Mitchell was for twenty years librarian of the Nantucket Athenaeum—the centre of literary interest in this town since its foundation—during which period she left upon the community an impression of her character and influence for good, for all time; because of the honor reflected upon her native place from the world-wide fame won by her life-long labors in the cause of science and reform, and the honest pride in this fame felt by every worthy son and daughter of Nantucket—for these reasons it seems eminently fitting that the representatives of this institution should attempt to provide it with some suitable memorial of her.

It is therefore moved, that a committee of three be appointed by the chair, from the trustees and proprietors, the chairman of which shall be the president of the board of trustees, to take measures for procuring a durable and life-like portrait of Prof. Mitchell, to be preserved in an appropriate place in the Athenaeum building, under the control of its board of trustees; that this committee be hereby desired to confer with the family of Miss Mitchell, requesting their approval of the movement, and to offer to every descendant of Nantucket, whether resident or non-resident, the opportunity of contributing, in smaller or larger amount, to a fund for this purpose; that this committee be hereby authorized to carry the purposes of this motion to their consummation; that if, in the manner suggested above, a sum of money be raised, larger than is required for the above-named purpose, the residue be applied as the nucleus of a constantly increasing fund—to be called the Maria Mitchell memorial fund, and to remain as a perpetual memorial of her, the income of which shall be used for the purchase of books for the library, and that this fund be, as all other funds of the Nantucket Athenaeum are, under the control of its board of trustees, subject to the above-mentioned condition; that the contributors to this fund shall constitute the Maria Mitchell Memorial Association, having for its trustees and officers the trustees and officers of the Nantucket Athenaeum; that this committee be hereby authorized to issue to each contributor a contributor's certificate, signed by the president of the board of trustees, entitling him to membership in the Maria Mitchell Memorial Association, and to exhibit the portrait to friends at all times when the Athenaeum and library are open to proprietors; that this committee be hereby requested to report at a quarterly, or some other future meeting of the board of trustees, and at the next annual meeting of the proprietors.

The motion was unanimously carried, and it is earnestly hoped that every descendant of our island will feel a sense of personal responsibility that the amount of this fund shall, in the present, reflect credit on the discernment and liberality of our townspeople, and in the future shall be a constantly growing tribute to the memory of one so honored and respected here where her early life was passed.

Let no one be withheld from giving from a feeling that the offering must be small, but let every one contribute according to his ability or desire; thus making the memorial one of all our people, and securing for ourselves an abiding interest therein; thus aiding to hold in grateful and appreciative remembrance one whose early labors are so closely allied with our own history; thus showing ourselves worthy sharers in a fame, unique in that history, which has helped so much to associate the name of our island home with the ideas of exalted character, the best culture, and a noble enthusiasm for progress.

Any member of the committee, or of the board of receivers organized by them, will gladly credit contributions for the above-mentioned fund. Should

offerings come from sources other than those indicated above, they will be accepted with grateful thanks.

THADDEUS C. DEFRIEZ, President.  
ELLEN O. SWAIN,  
(Address this winter, 145 Clinton St., Brooklyn, N. Y.).

ELIZABETH G. M. BARNEY, Treasurer of Com.,  
(this winter at 22 Chatham St., Lynn, Mass.),  
Proprietor's Committee.

Receivers.—Miss Rebecca A. Gardner, Mrs. Catherine Starbuck, Mrs. Edward W. Perry, Mr. Albert G. Brock, Miss Elma Folger, Miss Annie Chinery, Mrs. Benjamin Robinson, Miss Sarah F. Barnard, Librarian.

Jan. 11, 1890

### From the N. Y. Life Illustrated. LIFE IN NANTUCKET.—No. 3. BY MRS. J. H. HANAFORD.

MESSES. EDITORS.—As the subject of my last letter was of direct descent from Peter Folger, and thus related to Dr. Franklin, so also are the father and daughter of whom I shall here speak. The same love of mathematics, and ability to excel therein, exists in these two worthy individuals as in Walter Folger, though probably not combined with the same inventive genius and mechanical skill. I refer to the Hon. William Mitchell, and his daughter Maria, the latter of whom is well known as the lady astronomer of America. I suppose, were they not already so prominently before the public, it might not be so well to refer in these familiar letters to them, as they are still, and it is hoped long may be, "among the living." And they have ever been emphatically among the living. If, as Holy Writ declareth, those that live in pleasure are dead while they live, so also may this be said of those who devote all their energies to lower pursuits, and pass through life in a sort of intellectual lethargy. This can not be said of Mr. Mitchell or his daughter. They have ever been alive to the love and pursuit of science, and have undoubtedly contributed largely to the awakening of a scientific taste among this people. Mr. Mitchell is quoted as an oracle here on all questions relative to his astronomical pursuits, where his opinion may be given, and is highly esteemed in the community which has known him from boyhood. In the Society of Friends, of which he is a member, he is also highly esteemed. As cashier of the Pacific Bank, in this place, he has come in contact with business men very extensively, and is much liked for the fidelity, honesty, and urbanity with which he performs his duties. He has been a member of the Executive Council of Massachusetts, and his life, should it ever be written, would show that he had been a close student of nature and of men, and had deserved his high place in the estimation of the scientific world.

His daughter Maria was his pupil, and early became his companion in astronomical pursuits. Mrs. Hale, in her work on the "Celebrated Women of America," does not, in my view, make sufficient mention of this lady. She speaks of her in respectful terms, but makes prominent but one fact, I think, connected with her, which was, that in youth she was in the habit of carrying about pieces of cloth with which to wrap the bruised fingers of her brothers and sisters, should they chance to have such. But though this is not what her admirers would have written, it is no mean praise. The spirit of a Florence Nightingale or an Elizabeth Fry was evinced in the act, and they who believe that the heart as well as the mind should be developed, will honor her all the more for the statement. My own earliest impressions of her are connected with manifestations of kindness, as she took me by the hand and led my youthful feet to the Athenaeum in our town, of

which she was for more than a dozen years librarian, and permitted me to revel among its treasures, with this proviso alone, that I should not disturb her studies. Here I imbibed a respect for her which has "grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength," and if these personal reminiscences would seem out of place to any, it must be to those whose hearts are encased in steel or petrified to adamant. Softer, warmer, truer hearts will be satisfied in learning that one of those who stands among the prominent women of our country, is not only possessed of superior intellectual abilities, but of warm, generous sympathies. I have now in my possession a book, dilapidated from frequent handling because much read, but yet connected with pleasant associations, because a gift from her hand in those "days of yore." Its title is "The Children's Robinson Crusoe," by Mrs. Farrar, and what is most singular in reference to it is the fact, as Miss Mitchell has since told me, that it was the first book of fiction in which she was interested, and a work on astronomy by the author's husband, Prof. Farrar, of Cambridge, was among the first, perhaps the first, which she studied.

In 1847, Miss Mitchell discovered the telescopic comet which now bears her name, and received, in consequence, the award founded by Frederick VI., King of Denmark, of a gold medal valued at twenty ducats. As her home was in this "out-of-the-way island," and there was a difficulty in announcing the fact of the discovery, in accordance with the stipulations of the King, there was a doubt for a while whether she would receive it. But the only difficulty in the way was a technical one. Her priority of discovery was immediately conceded throughout the scientific world, and through the timely exertions of her own and her father's friends, the Bonds of Cambridge Observatory, and Hon. Edward Everett, the medal was finally secured to the lady who had earned it, not only by the discovery of the comet, but by the long years of devotion to her favorite science.

Neither Mr. Mitchell nor his daughter have had much leisure for penning their thoughts for the general reader, and we can not therefore point to their printed works as an evidence of their abilities. Mr. Mitchell has several times lectured with great acceptance on his favorite themes, and those who would like an interesting description of the Astronomical Observatory of Harvard University, can find such from his pen, published in Boston in 1851. The only article from the pen of his daughter, now obtainable by me, is to be found in the little volume by Nantucket authors, which was published for the benefit of its compiler, whom ill health had compelled to relinquish her former employment as teacher.

Miss Mitchell is now absent on a European tour. Recent letters state that she is in England, enjoying the hospitalities and scientific communion of the Royal Astronomer, Prof. G. B. Airy, and the former President of the Royal Astronomical Society, Admiral Smyth.

An effort is being made by Rev. Dr. Hall, of Providence, and others, to raise \$3,000 from the ladies of the United States, in order to purchase an observatory for her, as a tribute of respect. May it soon be accomplished!

June 29, 1858

THE MARIA MITCHELL FUND.—When Maria Mitchell became, in 1865, the first Professor of Astronomy and Director of the Observatory at Vassar College, all private plans and investigations which would have added to her fame were laid aside with a complete surrender of selfish ambition. To make the Observatory thoroughly scientific in all its appointments, and the Astronomical Department independent and self-supporting, was her dearest wish. Towards that end she raised \$5000, but was prevented from further effort by failing health. As a memorial to Professor Mitchell, the Vassar Alumnae are now raising an endowment fund to carry out her most cherished purposes. Several thousand dollars are yet needed to complete the fund of \$40,000. In behalf of this endowment fund, an appreciative biographical sketch of Miss Mitchell, written by Prof. Mary W. Whitney, has been printed in a dainty pamphlet, accompanied by a portrait of Miss Mitchell. The treasurer of the fund is Miss M. H. Pierson, 13 Hillyer street, Orange, N. J.

May 1, 1890

### Life of Maria Mitchell.

We have received from the publishers, Lee & Shepard, Boston, a copy of the Life of Maria Mitchell, recently compiled by her sister, Mrs. Phebe M. Kendall, is bound in cloth and illustrated with a fine portrait of Miss Mitchell. The work treats quite fully of her early life at Nantucket, her studies and discoveries, her travels in the Old World and her work at Vassar college. It also contains interesting extracts from her diary and correspondence.

The character and personality of Maria Mitchell was so strong, and her services so valuable, not only to Vassar College and its pupils, but also to the great body of young women everywhere, in her efforts for their higher education and their advancement into the more intellectual paths previously held almost entirely by men, that this sketch of her life and correspondence, by her sister, Mrs. Kendall, will be welcomed by thousands of her pupils, friends and admirers, and be an inspiration to others.

As an astronomer she took a foremost rank, making many valuable discoveries, and receiving the gold medal from the King of Denmark for the discovery of the comet of 1848.

As the only woman ever admitted as a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the only one ever admitted into the papal observatory at Rome, she occupies a unique position, and her reminiscences, as told in her letters, of the foremost scientific and literary people of Europe and America, with all whom she came in contact, are extremely interesting.

The book is on sale at the store of Miss P. E. Clisby, Centre street.

Aug. 13, 1896



THE RETIREMENT OF PROF. MARIA MITCHELL.—Miss Maria Mitchell, for many years Professor of Astronomy at Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, N. Y., and the first incumbent of that position, has resigned the professorship. For twenty-two years she has taught astronomy in that institution. She was born in Nantucket, Mass., Aug. 1, 1818, and there began her astronomical work at the age of eleven years, by assisting her father in observing a lunar eclipse. In 1847 she discovered a comet, and this made her fame, the King of Denmark giving her a gold medal in honor of the achievement. She has since added seven other comets to her list, being the first discoverer of all of them. She visited Europe shortly after 1847, and was there the guest of Sir John Herschel and Sir George Airy, then Astronomer Royal at Greenwich. She holds the degree of LL.D. from three institutions, the last being granted by Columbia College. She is one of the glories of Nantucket, the natives of that island being very proud of its distinguished daughter. Her resignation was prompted solely by a desire for rest, which was needed on account of her advanced age.—*Scientific American*.

1888

For the Inquirer and Mirror.

Mr. Editor:

Since the decease of Maria Mitchell, which occurred June 28, 1889, the press has teemed with mortuary eulogies of her work as a public woman and as an astronomer. Her many friends and relatives on the island of Nantucket, which we are proud to call the place of her nativity, have naturally been gratified to read these appreciative communications.

While her influence was widely felt in promoting intellectual progress generally, she was more especially solicitous to elevate young women by helping them to a "higher education." This interest was not confined to those under her tutelage at Vassar College, in which, for twenty-five years she filled the chair as professor of Astronomy; but outside of that noble institution, wherever she heard of a young girl struggling to overcome obstacles in the path of learning, there her hand was stretched out to help.

Duty was her pole-star. Her voice, pen and purse were all brought under contribution in the line of educational work. And how many a well-to-do girl, in imminent danger of being lured into a life of frivolity, with all its attendant evils, must look back with grateful remembrance to the saving power of Miss Mitchell's observatory! There was engendered that inspiring enthusiasm which led them to slake their native thirst for excitement at the fountain of knowledge. This draught enhanced the pleasure as well as the usefulness of their lives through all subsequent years.

There was a side of Maria Mitchell's character of which there has been no adequate recognition in the multiplied details of her career which have appeared in the papers—an attribute of love and tenderness, felt by all who knew her most intimately—a heart quality which made it an inestimable privilege to be counted among her personal friends. These understood the warmth and depth of her affectional nature. Her whole-souled generosity and self-forgetfulness seemed to them something wonderful! She possessed a genius for that higher order of friendship of which only great souls are capable. Her personal friends, as well as her relatives near and dear, held her in so high regard and so keenly feel their loss, that they deem it a privilege to pay due homage to the union of learning and benevolence which caused the deceased to become so marked a character. But let us trust that Death, by relieving her of the infirmities which prematurely cut short her active career in this world, will open up to her greater opportunities for service—for cosmic investigation in the clearer light which shines in realms beyond our mortal ken. Her last days were very peaceful and happy. Fully realizing that her end was near, she calmly awaited the approach of death as a blessed angel of relief. Though her lips were dumb, her spirit seemed to say in complete resignation:

"I wait,  
Till in white death's tranquility  
Shall softly fall away from me  
This weary life's infirmity;  
That I in larger light, may learn  
The larger truth I would discern,  
The larger love for which I yearn."

A. G.

1889

PROF. MARIA MITCHELL IN COLORADO.—Matilda Hindman, in her correspondence with the *Woman's Journal* of Saturday last, writes as follows concerning the lecture and reception given by and to Miss Mitchell at Denver, Colorado, recently:

Among the noble women who are searching out the great truth that is to make life better for the weak ones, we see in the front ranks, Prof. Maria Mitchell and her sister, Mrs. Kendall of Cambridge, Mass. Though wearied and worn with the long journey of two thousand miles in the hottest of July weather; though weighted with the anxiety and labor of preparing for and taking observations of the eclipse, Prof. Mitchell did not say, as some did: "I have one work, that will I do, and let all others alone;" but, when asked if she would give a lecture for the benefit of the Equal Rights League of Colorado, she most cheerfully consented, and on Tuesday evening, the 30th of July, lectured in the M. E. Church of Denver; the proceeds to be appropriated to advancing the cause of Woman Suffrage in Colorado. The only remuneration she received was the sincere thanks and best wishes of all the friends of right and justice. The lecture and lecturer were spoken of in highest terms by the press and by all who had the good fortune to hear her speak on the astronomer, Herschel. On the Thursday evening following, a reception was given in the parlors of the Grand Central Hotel, to Prof. Mitchell and Mrs. Kendall, the character of which was evidenced by the editorials which appeared in the Denver papers. Prof. Mitchell and her sister made many friends in Denver, and their visit will long be remembered as one of the most pleasing events of the week of the great eclipse.

1878



PIONEERS IN THE PROFESSIONS—This mural panel of carved mahogany showing nine of 17 women selected as pioneers in the professions, will soon be erected in the Washington headquarters of the American Association of University Women as a gift from Dorothy Rood of Minneapolis, former Association treasurer. In the mural are, from left, Anne Hutchinson, religious leader; Abigail Adams, first mistress of the White House; Sacajawea, Shoshone Indian guide; Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin"; Clara Barton, founder of the

American Red Cross; Elizabeth Blackwell, first woman doctor in medicine; Maria Mitchell, astronomer; Alice Freeman Palmer, educator; Julia Strudwick Tutwiller, prison reformer and educator. Women in the second panel (not shown) will be Susan B. Anthony, exponent of women's rights; Sarah Josepha Hale, editor of Godey's "Lady's Book"; Jane Addams, social worker; Mary Cassatt, artist; Maude Adams, actress; Edna St. Vincent Millay, poet; Amelia Earhart, aviator; and Florence B. Sabin, research scientist in medicine.

Washington Sunday Post  
June 30, 1957(?)



## Maria Mitchell a Factor in American History.

From The National Republican.

Women who led the social life of Washington under the administration of the second Adams or in the days of Jackson knew that it was possible for a woman to win fame in astronomy because Caroline Herschel had done so. But that an American woman should do so seemed exceedingly improbable, even that any man should have such astronomical facilities as the Old World offered was very unlikely. While there were occasional allusions to the work of David Rittenhouse, whose achievements in view of his handicaps were surprising, the country in general did not look up to the heavens as it looked for roads through the wilderness or for a profitable canal. John Quincy Adams begged his countrymen to erect some of the lighthouses of the skies that showed how Europe was advancing in science, and the ridicule that followed is not now pleasant to recall.

On August 1, 1818, Maria Mitchell was born on Nantucket Island. Her parents were Friends and it may again be stated that in proportion to their numbers the followers of Fox have reared a long roll of scientific workers. Cut off from military or naval ambition, barred from university distinctions, excluded from many legal posts and averse to political life, the Friends have developed the patient investigation necessary to scientific eminence. William Mitchell had a flower garden, a telescope and a glass ball filled with water that he used in his experiments on polarization of light. He encouraged his eldest daughter to draw. The children early learned that there was a good library in town. In the evening the quiet father, as he led his children to watch the stars, would often repeat Young's famous line: "An un-devout astronomer is made." No wonder that Maria, as a little child learned the hymn beginning, "The spacious firmament on high," and it is stated by Phebe Mitchell Kendall in her biography: "In her later years if she had a sudden fright which threatened to take away her senses she would test her mental condition by repeating that poem; it is needless to say that she always remembered it, and her nerves instantly relapsed into their natural condition."

### A Successful Teacher.

Such a man as William Mitchell was naturally successful as a schoolmaster, and Maria, after some experience in another class room, became one of her father's pupils. Her first teacher won her life-long gratitude as will be seen by her diary: "I count in my life, outside of family relatives, three aids given me on my journey; they are prominent to me; the woman who first made the study book charming; the man who sent me the first hundred dollars I ever saw to buy books with; and another noble woman, through whose efforts I became the owner of a telescope; and of these, the first was the greatest." From her father's school, she passed to the charge of Cyrus Peirce, who in time headed the first normal school in the United States. She early learned to use the sextant and had better opportunities than a child of our generation may suppose, for the telescope her father borrowed from the coast survey to use in his work for the government was equal to the one to be found at Harvard.

At sixteen Maria Mitchell became a teacher, and subsequently librarian for the Nantucket Athenaeum, where she read Laplace's "Mecanique Celeste," translated by her father's friend, Nathaniel Bowditch. It cannot be called "light reading" though it helps one to study light. Laplace is credited with saying: "There are only two persons in England who can understand my Mecanique Celeste and, strange to say, they are both women, Mrs. Greig and Mrs. Somerville," and was surprised to learn that after the death of Captain Greig his widow had become Mrs. Somerville.

### Aids The Sailors.

Besides working on her own lines of study Miss Mitchell encouraged sailor boys to learn navigation. She was the confidante of many young girls and she managed to lose books it was best for the rising generation not to read. She helped her sisters to pay for a piano, and while the parents officially ignorant of such frivolities were out of the house the piano was brought into the house. The mother apprehended a protest from the meeting, and there was one, but the piano remained.

A girl who is studious, industrious in domestic affairs, and fond of amusing the younger members of the household may be hard-worked but it is not likely to be low spirited. Maria Mitchell in 1847 discovered a comet. President Edward Everett of Harvard sent a notice of her discovery to the Astronomische Nachrichten. Admiral Smyth, of the British navy urged her claim, and the King of Denmark sent her a gold medal. The next year she was unanimously elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and her diploma was signed by Asa Gray, the celebrated botanist.

Compliments are the sweeter if they lead to congenial work, and they surely did in the case of Maria Mitchell. In 1849, the year of the rush to the California gold fields, Alexander Dallas Bache found her astronomical employment in Maine, and Charles H. Davis (never-to-be-forgotten in the navy) chose her as computer for the American Nautical Almanac, a post she filled for nineteen years.

When Horace Greeley scornfully declared that the regents of the Smithsonian Institution published books "Which do no good to anybody," it was Maria Mitchell's pride to reply that in the little Athenaeum library of Nantucket these books were in constant demand. She was intellectually as well as financially benevolent. When stormy winters came she did her part to relieve those whom all count poor, and she also helped neighbors to read, to think, to observe sky and sea to get out of the mental poverty that is often the lot of persons who never pity themselves. "We are now," she notes in January, 1857, "sixteen daily papers behind the rest of the world, and in those sixteen papers are items known to all the people in all the cities, which will never be known to us."

Early in 1857 Miss Mitchell with the daughter of a banker, made a trip to the South and West. One day she found that every man in the stage coach had supported Buchanan, another coach was full of Fremont vo-

ters. The Mississippi was full of wonders, she looked on slavery as more harmful to the whites than to the bondmen, she explored the Mammoth Cave. Next came the beginning of a tour in Europe with her young friend. We say the beginning, for the banker failed, and his daughter went home, but Miss Mitchell stayed abroad, pursued her studies, traveled with Nathaniel Hawthorne and his wife, met such astronomers as Sir George Airy and Admiral Smyth, was a guest under the roof of Sir John Herschel, talked very poor French in reply to Leverrier's imperfect English, and through Father Secchi gained permission to visit the Roman Observatory. Her comment on Secchi is forceful—that having no prescribed duties, he "could follow his fancies, he could pick up comets as he picked up bits of mosaic upon the Roman forum." Mrs. Somerville, then seventy-seven, but apparently twenty years younger, won her heart. Famous in the annals of the skies, an excellent wife and mother, in early years a good musician, a devotee of rose bushes, eager in all sorts of betterments, Mrs. Somerville was one to be honored all the more because she prided herself on being connected with the English branch of the Washingtons. Then came a call upon Humboldt, and this is too valuable to be lost (remember that Humboldt was eighty-nine): "Having been nearly a year in Europe, I had not kept up my reading of American newspapers, but Humboldt could tell me the latest news, scientifically and politically. To my ludicrous mortification, he told me of the change of position of some scientific professor in New York State, and when I showed that I didn't know the location of the town, which was Clinton, he told me if I would look at the map, which lay upon the table, I should find the town somewhere between Albany and Buffalo."

### Remembering Humboldt.

All through her life Maria Mitchell remembered, as she well might, her interview with Humboldt. Her tribute to the great man is a noble one: "No young aspirant in science ever left Humboldt's presence uncheered, and no petty animosities come out in his record. You never heard of Humboldt's complaining that anyone had stolen his thunder—he knew that no one could lift his bolts." Back she came to receive from American women, through Miss Elizabeth Peabody, the gift of our equatorial telescope, and a cheery letter of congratulation from Admiral Smyth.

Vassar College in 1865 called Maria Mitchell as professor of astronomy and director of the observatory. For three years she continued her work for the Nautical Almanac. Her mother was dead, but for four years of her college life her father was her companion. In 1869, she went with some of her pupils to Burlington, Iowa, to see a total eclipse of the sun, and wrote a popular account of it. Her wit seems to have impressed her pupils as much as her learning. A college vacation enabled her to visit the Russian university at Pulkova and, student as she was, it was not easy to accustom herself to Old Style—for instance, to leave London on July 22, to get to Petrograd in five days, and a week later to find that it was July 22. In France and Germany she could read signs or ask

questions—sometimes in Russian she had to depend wholly on observation, and she found much pleasure in it. To illustrate the Russian belief that languages should be learned quickly, let us refer to Madame Struve, who spoke German and French and complained of her stupidity in not being able to speak English, though she had been for three weeks with an English lady. Petrograd's thousands of women in scientific studies awed the American visitor. The questions asked by three young girls about Vassar surprised her, but their father had been for two years in this country.

Accounts of Western trips on astronomical quests show the excellence of Miss Mitchell's style. She had begun as a child to watch the heavens, she had read the masterpieces of science, she had crossed the great deep, she had stood upon the high mountains, and all this told in her writing. Yet she wrote comparatively little, a paper on Mary Somerville and one on the Herschels being probably the best known. For fifty years she was steadily earning a salary, and she hoped to teach until seventy, but when half a year short of that she resigned her position. On June 28, 1889, she died at her home in Lynn. Her life well illustrates the tendency of mental traits to descend from father to daughter, and the intense intellectual activity that often shows in small communities cut off from the great highways of life.

## Group Gets Maria Mitchell Relics

Relics of Maria Mitchell and her father, William Mitchell, have been given to The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association by Prof. Alfred Dame, a direct descendant of William Mitchell.

A lecture on meteorology, given by William Mitchell, the 1805 log of Andrew Coleman, Maria's grandfather, the original draft of a report of the Committee for Visiting the Observatory of Harvard College drawn by William Mitchell, are among the papers.

A one dollar bill drawn on the Pacific Bank in 1859, in the days when banks made their own bills, is made out to William Mitchell. It is framed and under glass.

Part of an astronomical story presumably written by Maria Mitchell for her niece Fanny Macy is the most readily legible of all the papers. Written with a fine pen, the letters resemble modern block script.

Oct. 3, 1958



From the New York Sun, Feb. 5, 1888.

## Honoring Maria Mitchell.

VASSAR GIRLS DISAPPOINTED BY THE PROFESSOR'S ILLNESS. ANECDOTES OF HER AND A EULOGY AT THE ALUMNE REUNION—SHE FINDS IT HARD TO GET YOUNG AT SEVENTY.

When Vassar College opened its doors in 1865 to give American women a chance to get a collegiate education, Maria Mitchell was appointed the first Professor of Astronomy. She had been known to astronomers before that time, and in the twenty-two years that have passed since then her fame has grown. On August 1 last summer she was 69 years old, and though she came back to Poughkeepsie when the college semester began, she felt that she would not be able to finish her seventieth year with her eye at the college telescope. The long watches of the night, and the abstruse mathematical calculations of the day, had told on her strong frame, and when Christmas came she wrote her resignation.

The trustees declined to accept it, told her they would keep her as Professor of Astronomy, and that she might go away to rest until she should be sufficiently strong to take her work again. And then the alumne decided to give her a reception at their annual meeting in the Hotel Brunswick. She promised that she would come. Over 1,000 invitations were sent out, and the reception was set for yesterday as the final event of the yearly meeting.

The Brunswick's largest saloon was filled in the afternoon with the invited guests and 250 graduates. But Dr. Maria Mitchell, LL. D., was not there. That was disappointing, but the news that the aged instructor was perhaps seriously ill was still more disappointing. President J. M. Taylor was the only man in the room. All talked about Miss Mitchell's sickness. At 3 P. M. the guests came. Mrs. Frances Fisher Wood, wife of Dr. William B. Wood and President of the New York Alumne Association, rose and said she had received a letter from Dr. Mitchell saying that she could not be present at the reception because of her ill health.

"Miss Mitchell is at Lynn with her sister," went on Mrs. Wood. "She writes me: 'I have noticed that the attempt to grow young again is at 70 not often a success. It goes to my heart to say that I cannot come to the reception in New York, but I am tired, and after more than half a century am trying to rest.' To the alumne she added: 'I have watched you even more than the stars. I rejoice in every good work done through you and in each onward step taken by you for the advancement of women.'"

Then Mrs. Wood read an eulogy upon the astronomer. Miss Mitchell was born at Nantucket in 1818. Her ancestors had been among the first Quakers who went to that part of the country. Her father was William Mitchell, a bank cashier, who had a penchant for astronomy, and in his house telescopes and astronomical apparatus were in nightly use. When she was 11 years old the daughter recorded the instants of the beginning and the end of a lunar eclipse, her father looking through the glass, she watching the second hand of the chronometer. Fifty-four years later there was a similar eclipse, and, though then she might have stood at the glass herself, she preferred to celebrate the event of her girl time in 1829 by performing the service at the chronometer, while her students took her father's post.

Miss Mitchell went to school at Nantucket. When 18 she became librarian of the Nantucket Atheneum. For twenty years she kept the place, and now she says that in those times she laid the foundation of her attainments in astronomy and mathematics. Her duties as librarian were few, and she used the opportunity to solve the problems of space. Not until the stars had lost their twinkle in the early dawn did she for night after night leave her telescope to go to sleep. In 1847 came the discovery of the comet, which introduced the young astronomer

to the older astronomers of the world. For the finding of that wanderer the King of Denmark gave her a gold medal. To this, most people think her reputation is due. But she says, "No. If any credit is due it is for the mathematical success of working out its orbit. This was difficult, and took a long time to accomplish." There are seven other comets which she has found, being in advance of other watchers in some cases by a few days, in others by only a few hours. Soon after 1847 Miss Mitchell went to Europe, gazed through the great telescopes, was feted by the wise men, and was a guest in England of Sir John Herschel and Sir George Airy, then Astronomer Royal at Greenwich. After her return, and when Vassar was founded she became its Professor of Astronomy. That she might study the heavens she did not marry. And her friends think that in any sphere she would have gone to the front as a woman remarkable in every way. Three institutions have given her the degree of LL. D., Columbia the latest. Could she now do any work, she would re-erect the telescope with which she was working when summoned to Vassar, and there take up again the study of double

stars upon which she was then engaged.

Her ancestry and her Nantucket ocean environment gave her a rugged nature, physical and intellectual. Tall and bony not masculine, and yet not wholly feminine, she presents a picture everywhere which forces attention. "Time," said Mrs. Wood yesterday, "has touched her face with many softening lines. The features are still irregular and unclassical, but a pure life, high thoughts, and noble purposes have written in eloquent language the evidence of a great nature." She dresses in the quiet Quaker garb, is like and unlike a Friend. Her character is not well rounded. It has square and some sharp corners. In the common meaning of the word, Maria Mitchell was not popular at Vassar. Her rooms were not crowded with students. She was not of that group of teachers who gave the college girls a taste of home, and who entered freely into close friendship with the students. But they liked her, and though one of them said yesterday: "She kissed me only twice in fifteen years," they revered her with that awe which women have for one of their own kind far above them.

"When commencement time comes and 'good-byes' are heard everywhere, Prof. Mitchell never says the word. Instead she will invite you to visit her flower garden and help her strip some rose bush. It was in this way she spoke her farewells to the latest class of graduates. Almost the last time the young women of '87 were addressed as a class it was by Prof. Mitchell, and then she asked each of them to pay a final visit to the observatory garden and take with her a rose in memory of the college hill days.

"As many times as she went over the ground in astronomy, she never failed to study each day's lesson with each year's class. Her students could regularly count on having an easy and short lesson the day after faculty meetings. Attendance at these meetings she used to consider the biggest bore of all her college duties. She would say, 'I'll give you only a little to do for to-morrow, for I must go to faculty to-day, and I'll be too weary to prepare a long lesson myself.' In the early days of the college these meetings had more of a religious character than at present. They were usually opened with prayers and some passage from the Bible. Prof. Mitchell would always manage to get late for this part of the programme, and when the President requested her presence, she made future reference to the matter impossible by the remark that she was 'unable to pray to order.'"

"Even though her students always did themselves credit, she would not allow visitors to the classes unless she herself invited them. Once recently President Taylor was quite nonplussed when, on entering her class room in company with a distinguished college guest, she said: 'Now, girls, I hate company, and I know you don't want to show off. So you may be dismissed.'"

Miss Mitchell lived in the observatory on the college hill. On the last Saturday before commencement the girls always had a "dome party" there with her, and to the air of "John Brown" they always sang a song called "Good Woman that she am." Here are some of the stanzas:

We are singing for the glory of Maria Mitchell's name,  
She lives at Vassar College, and you all do know  
the same,  
She once did spy a comet, and she thus was known  
to fame,  
Good woman that she was.

She leads us thro' the mazes of hard astronomy,  
She teaches us nutation and the laws of Kepler  
three,  
Th' inclination of their orbits and their eccentricity,  
Good woman that she be.

Sing her praises, sing her praises, good woman  
that she were,  
For though Pope says 'tis human, she is hardly  
known to err,  
And from the path of virtue she never strayeth  
fur.

Good woman that she were.  
Sing her praises, sing her praises, good woman  
that she is,  
For to give us joy and welcome her chiefest  
pleasure 'tis:  
Let her name be sung forever, till through space  
her praises whiz,  
Good woman that she is.

When the girls yesterday got through  
telling reminiscences of the absent professor,  
this telegram was sent:

Feb. 4, 1888.

Prof. Maria Mitchell, Lynn, Mass.

The General Association of Alumne of Vassar joins with the Alumne Association of New York city and vicinity in sending to Prof. Mitchell their expression of love and loyalty to her, and their inexpressible regret that she was unable to be present.

MISS RICHARDSON, Secretary.

## For the Journal.

The funeral services of the late celebrated astronomer, Maria Mitchell were held in Nantucket, her native town, at the residence of her sister, Mrs. Alfred Macy, on Sunday, June 30, and were attended by eleven members of her immediate family, by other relations and a large circle of friends.

The funeral arrangements were very quiet and unostentatious in accord with the taste of the deceased and with the Quaker-like simplicity of her character. There were few floral decorations save a profusion of pure white flowers brought as heart offerings by her friends and reverently laid upon her casket.

Dr. James Taylor, President of Vassar College, was most appropriately the speaker on that occasion. Nothing could be more beautifully appreciative either in sentiment or in manner, than the high tribute he paid to the intellectual caliber and to the acquirements of the deceased Professor of Astronomy at Vassar College. He also commended her eminent success as a teacher, through her inspiring presence.

Taking in the whole range of her exalted character, he dwelt emphatically upon the love of truth, the devotion to justice, which pervaded her entire life. Genuineness, said he was Maria Mitchell's leading characteristic. She could not bear shams. Her life, he added, was profoundly religious. His remarks, throughout, met the deepest and most sympathetic response on the part of his hearers.

In accordance with her desire she was interred beside her father, mother and brother in Prospect Hill Cemetery. The lovers of science as well as her many friends abroad, will deem it no small privilege to make a pilgrimage to her grave.

A. G.

## OBITUARY.

MARIA MITCHELL.

Miss Maria Mitchell, one of the most noted Astronomers of the age died at Lynn, Mass., Friday morning. She was born in Nantucket, on the first day of August, 1818, and was the third in a family of ten children. William Mitchell, the father of Maria, was a man of studious habit and scientific tastes, and throughout his busy life devoted what time he could to astronomical pursuits. At an early age Miss Mitchell became an active assistant of her father in his work. At eleven years she recorded the instants of the beginning and end of a lunar eclipse, her father looking through the glass, she watching the second hand of the chronometer. Miss Mitchell was educated wholly in the schools of Nantucket. At eighteen she was appointed librarian of the Nantucket Atheneum, and held that position for more than twenty years. In 1847 she discovered a telescopic comet, in recognition of which she received a gold medal from the king of Denmark. Shortly after the discovery of the comet Miss Mitchell had occasion to visit England, where she was the guest of Sir John Herschel and Sir George Airy, then astronomer royal at Greenwich. She also made an extensive tour on the continent of Europe. On the opening of Vassar College, in 1865, Miss Mitchell was appointed professor of astronomy and director of the observatory in that institution. For nearly a quarter of a century she occupied that position, contributing greatly to the success of the college and making it widely known through her own renown. She had received the title of LL. D. from three colleges, the last being conferred by Columbia College at the celebration of its 200th anniversary. At the annual meeting of the Vassar Alumne Association of New York, held in New York in January, 1888, a jubilee reception was tendered to Miss Mitchell. She then resigned her position, as her strength was no longer equal to the burdens of the professorship. The trustees of the college laid her resignation upon the table, thus continuing her in her position, but they released her from the cares of the department. She was a member of various scientific societies, was the first woman to be elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and has been prominently mentioned in the movement tending to elevate woman's work, having held the presidency of the American Association for the Advancement of Women. Her remains were brought to Nantucket Saturday, and Sunday afternoon were laid to rest in the family lot at Prospect Hill cemetery, the funeral services at the residence of Mrs. A. M. Macy being conducted by Prof. Taylor, President of Vassar college.

July 14, 1889

July 11, 1889



## California Launches a Victory Ship Named "Maria Mitchell."

The California Shipbuilding Corporation launched a ship a few weeks ago which was named the *Maria Mitchell*, in honor of the famous woman astronomer of Nantucket. When the Victory Ship slid off the ways at Terminal Island, she was christened by Mrs. John Kiely, wife of the yard foreman, who was fully aware of the honor bestowed.

The *Maria Mitchell* was the second of three vessels, launched recently by the Corporation, named for world-famous scientists. The first was named *George E. Hale*, the second *Maria Mitchell*, and the third *Simon Newton*. Others great names in the world of science will be perpetuated in other vessels.

Maria Mitchell of Nantucket, who discovered the comet which immortalized her nearly a century ago, and who became the first professor of astronomy at Vassar, is the only woman in the American Hall of Fame.

On Wednesday of next week, April 28, the Maria Mitchell Association is to hold its annual meeting in Boston. This Association, which has preserved the birthplace of Maria, constructed and maintained a modern observatory on adjacent property, and a scientific library across the way, has done a monumental work for Nantucket.

*Inquirer & Mirror*  
April 24, 1943

## Maria Mitchell and Her Island

By Elizabeth Fraser Torjesen

Author of the book about Nantucket, "Captain Ramsay's Daughter"

As Nantucket Island celebrates its 300th birthday this year, one of the most visited places will be a small weathered gray house on Vestal Street, built in the simple dignified fashion of the Quakers, for here lived Maria Mitchell, the girl who became America's first woman astronomer.

Maria early took an interest in her father's hobby—astronomy. When, with excitement running deep in his gentle voice, he told of a forthcoming annular eclipse of the sun, she watched, and wondered and questioned as he checked his calculations of the time at which it would occur. Although Maria was only twelve years old she was able to assist him in a small way, awakening in awe to the splendid orderliness of a universe where such happenings could be foretold with complete accuracy.

Maria was born on Aug. 1, 1818, the third child of William and Lydia Coleman Mitchell. As the family grew, every child (there were ten) early learned to lend a hand. Usually Maria was the first down to the cold kitchen. When the family gathered at the long wooden table a cheerful fire sparkled on the hearth in a room fragrant with the smell of her freshly baked graham bread.

During Maria's girlhood, Nantucket was the greatest whaling town in the world. In this seafaring town on an island thirty miles out to sea, a telescope was a household necessity used by Nantucketers on the white-railed "walks" atop their roofs to scan the horizon for homecoming ships that had roamed the Pacific in search of the sperm whale. No one knew when the whaleships would return; they stayed at sea until their holds were filled with oil. A dangerous and important business it was, for people everywhere depended on this oil to light their lamps, and Nantucket-made spermaceti candles were conceded to be the finest.

William Mitchell and Maria used their walk as an observatory, setting up a little brass telescope to watch the stars.

Maria was educated principally in her father's school. Her parents, members of the Quaker faith, endorsed the long-held position of the Friends that equal education is the right of all—a liberal view, for at that time little thought was given to educating girls.

William Mitchell saw no reason for limiting his pupils to monotonous drill, the accepted method of the day. He enjoyed stirring them not only to the wonders of the heavens but also to those that lay all around. Often he led them down to Nantucket Sound, through cobbled streets where drays rumbled by, hauling casks of oil from the wharfs.

In 1834, when a total eclipse of the sun occurred, Maria was sixteen and an old hand at assisting her father and checking and rechecking calculations, knowing their work must be absolutely accurate.

At that time she was assisting Cyrus Peirce in his school where she had also studied. It was he, afterward principal of the first normal school in the United States, who discovered Maria's remarkable talent for mathematics.

Then Maria decided to open a school of her own on Trader's Lane. She advertised that she would teach Reading, Spelling, Geography, Grammar, History, Natural Philosophy, Arithmetic, Geometry, and Algebra—no small feat when most girls were fortunate to learn to read and write.

About two years later a committee arrived at the Mitchell's and in the rose-papered sitting room, warm with neighborly friendliness, offered Maria the position of librarian at the Nantucket Athenaeum, a post she held for twenty-five years. Here the dark-eyed young woman in Quaker gray sat at a desk where a whale-oil lamp shed a circle of light on the books she discussed and helped girls and boys to choose.

Since most boys lived for the day when they could go to sea on the whalers, Miss Mitchell taught them how seamen navigate by the stars. It behooved them to pay close attention; their very lives might well

depend on what they remembered of her teaching, for in those days seamen had only the stars to guide them as they roamed uncharted seas.

Many a boy stopped by to tell Maria Mitchell of his voyages. Places like Ulithi, Guam, Tinian, Saipan, Oahu were familiar, and far better known than the Ohio country over on the continent which was being settled by folks who chose to make their home far from the sea.

At the library Maria sometimes found precious time to study. Her sister Phebe tells us that at that time there was no school in the world where Maria could study higher mathematics and astronomy. Harvard had no better telescope than the one their father was using.

On Oct. 1, 1847, although there were guests present, Maria excused herself, picked up a lantern and climbed to the rooftop to make her usual observations, returning shortly with the startling news that she had seen a comet.

The comet was seen elsewhere in the world by Father da Vico at Rome, but not until October third.

For this discovery, Maria Mitchell of Nantucket received a gold medal which had been offered by the King of Denmark to the first discoverer of a telescopic comet. Following this, she was unanimously elected to membership by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the first woman ever admitted.

While the whaling industry made Nantucket one of the wealthiest towns in Massachusetts, the finest speakers came to the island to lecture, among them Ralph Waldo Emerson. Maria commented: "Last night I heard Emerson give a lecture. I pity the reporter who attempts to give it to the world . . . it was without method, or order or system. It was like a beam of light . . . meeting with occasional meteors in its path; it was exceedingly captivating. It surprised me that there was not only no commonplace thought, but there was no commonplace expression."

After Maria's discovery, interest in the "lady astronomer" deepened. She traveled through the South, then through Europe, noting among other things how much freedom the women of Nantucket enjoyed. They had to be independent and self-reliant, called upon—as most were—to fend for themselves and their families for the duration of the long whaling voyages.

Happily Maria visited observatories in Paris, Rome, London, Liverpool, Greenwich, Glasgow — making friends with whom she corresponded as long as she lived.

When Vassar College was founded in 1865, and she became professor of astronomy and director of the observatory, she shared these visits with her students. One has written: "There is no need to speak of her ability; the world knows what that was. But as her classroom was unique, having something of home in its belongings, so its atmosphere differed from that of all others. . . . Then would come one of those treats . . . which seemed to put them in touch with the great outside world. Letters from astronomers in Europe or America or from members of their families . . . gave her listeners a wider outlook and new interests."

Always interested in the higher education of women, Professor Mitchell was President of the American Association for the Advancement of Women.

Of her method of teaching, Mary W. Whitney, her pupil and successor at Vassar, noted:

"As a teacher, Miss Mitchell's gift was that of stimulus, not that of drill. She could not drill; she would not drive. But no honest student could escape the pressure of her strong will and earnest intent."

In final tribute to this remarkable woman, Dr. Taylor, president of Vassar said, "If I were to select for comment the one most striking trait of her character, I should name her genuineness. There was no false note in Maria Mitchell's thinking or utterance. . . . She has been an impressive figure in our time and one whose influence lives."



# **"Sweeper in the Sky," Biography of Nantucket's Maria Mitchell.**

A new biography of Maria Mitchell was released to the public on Tuesday of this week by the MacMillan Company in New York. Aptly entitled "Sweeper in the Sky" and written by Helen Wright, the book joins the group of those which, once started, are not put down until the last page has been read.

The first part of the book deals entirely with Miss Mitchell's life on Nantucket when she became her father's assistant at an early age and quickly learned the mathematical computations necessary for plotting the positions of stars. Her aptitude in every phase of astronomical calculations increased to the point where, when not yet fourteen, she was able to plot corrections to a neighbor's chronometer as efficiently as her father. The influence of the Friends showed throughout her life although she early broke away from their faith.

In 1847, while still in her twenties, she discovered a comet in advance of the great scientists in Europe and thereafter became internationally known. She earned money to continue her studies by working for 25 years as librarian in the Nantucket Atheneum and by making astronomical calculations for Bowditch's "Practical Navigator". Later on as Professor of Astronomy at Vassar College she gained fame as a great teacher with liberal ideas far in advance of her time. Her astronomical observations, Miss Wright points out, suggested hypotheses "which are extraordinarily interesting in the light of modern knowledge".

Finally, as an ardent leader in the women's rights movement and President of the Association for the Advancement of Women, Maria Mitchell proves an inspiring heroine. Miss Wright's many years of research and study have produced an appreciative portrait of the life and work of Maria Mitchell, of whom Nantucket is justly proud.

Miss Wright, who first came to Nantucket in 1939, was born in Washington, D. C., where she was educated before attending schools in London and Lausanne, Switzerland. She attended Bennett Junior College and received her B. A. and M. A. Degrees from Vassar College. She also has attended the University of California.

Especially interested in astronomy, Miss Wright has been associated with the Vassar College astronomy department, with the U. S. Naval Observatory in Washington, D. C., the Mt. Wilson Observatory in Pasadena, California, and the Maria Mitchell Observatory in Nantucket, where she has worked with Miss Margaret Harwood. She has edited, with Harlow Shapley and Samuel Rapport, "A Treasury of Science", and is at present working on a life of George Ellery Hale, American astronomer who died in 1938. She has traveled in Canada, England, Switzerland, Italy, France and Mexico, and is interested in sculpture as a hobby.

# **"Sweeper in the Sky" Story of First Woman Astronomer.**

By John K. Hutchens in New York Herald Tribune, February 10.

"Well, if this is dying, there is nothing very unpleasant about it," said Maria Mitchell on her deathbed, which suggests that she was both lucky and sensible. America's first woman astronomer (1818-1889) was also brilliant, sardonically humorous and, as opponents of women's rights discovered, formidable. Reading the chronicle of her life that Miss Wright has pieced together, a reader can suspect that he and Maria might never have been exactly chums, but that, like almost every one who encountered her, one would have been a strong if cautious admirer.

Maria, who was brought up in the stern and forthright tradition of Nantucket Quakerism, was nothing if not honest. At twenty-five, having spotted a comet no one else had ever recorded, she became one of the best known women in the land, received a gold medal from the King of Denmark and went abroad to meet the scientific great on easy terms of equality. At home she knew Emerson, Thoreau, Agassiz, Whittier, Melville. She didn't stand in awe of them. It is just possible, indeed, that they regarded her with some apprehension; because, in a day when woman's place was allegedly in the home, Maria's home was chiefly in the sky, at which she gazed with a questioning mind and eyes so extraordinary that some of her findings are only now being rediscovered and confirmed by great telescopes.

Since most people's astronomical learning is limited to an occasional trip to the Planetarium, and their mathematics confined to a badly kept checkbook, Miss Wright wisely avoids the more technical aspects of Maria's career. Though she spent much of that career jotting down formulae ("A mathematical formula is a hymn of the universe" she used to say,) none of them, happily, are reproduced here—which must have taken some self-control on the part of Miss Wright, who is herself an astronomer. There is, instead, a plain account, but an interesting one, of the environment in which Maria's remarkable personality developed. When you finish "Sweeper in the Sky" you may be just about where you were in the first place, sidereally speaking, but you will have learned something of nineteenth-century America.

Early Nantucket, for instance. Whalers went out from it, and a feeling of the great world came home with them when they returned. In a sense, the South Pacific Ocean was closer than New York. "The Nantucket Inquirer" treated its readers not to local items but to news of "distant places and world events, exciting astronomical advances and geographical discoveries". When the Atheneum and its 3,200 books were burned, they were replaced. Scholars came regularly to lecture. Children boxed the sextant as they learned to read, and there was room to look at the stars. Simplicity and the independent spirit flourished there, and though Maria Mitchell's non-conformist mind came to reject the stern tenets of the Quakerism of the time, she kept the Friends' simplicity and distrust of vanity throughout her life.

But her great years were at Matthew Vassar's "Female College" at Poughkeepsie—"Vassar's Folly", the early wags called it—where she arrived on opening day in 1865 as professor of astronomy and remained for twenty-three years. She went there with diffidence and lived to become a Character—and a great teacher whose inspiration on the older alumnae have not forgotten. Her own opinion, as far as she could see, was as good as anyone else's, and she took no nonsense from anyone, including the president of the college. When he asked her to attend chapel regularly she told him: "I do not pray on order". In the college dining room, feeling no need to converse, she once announced: "I cannot be polite today". Having no use for weakness, she wrote to a sick friend: "I rejoice to hear that you are only half dead. The half is often better than the whole".

Out of this iron strength came her passion for the liberation of women through education, in the martial company of Julia Ward Howe, Lucy Stone and Lucretia Mott. The Association for the Advancement of Women elected her its President, and even the newspapers which had made jokes about the "Shrieking Sisterhood" had to call her "philosophical and wise". It is doubtful, however, if any one ever thought of calling Maria a shrieking sister to her face. "When a man bores me I think what a pity he couldn't be employed in constructing artesian wells", she wrote in her diary, probably before going out to look for another comet.

She also disliked commencement exercises and people who gave her advice that she hadn't asked for, and probably she would have been annoyed if she could have known that she would be elected to New York University's Hall of Fame in 1907. That the girl from Nantucket belonged there, Miss Wright's unpretentiously written memorial makes entirely clear.

1949

# **Author of "Sweeper in The Sky" To Be Honored Here Next Week.**

Helen Wright, author of "Sweeper in the Sky," published this year by MacMillan, will be in Nantucket from July 22nd to August 1st. Her book, which is the biography of the distinguished Nantucket woman astronomer, Maria Mitchell, has been acclaimed by reviewers in all parts of the country. In Miss Wright's honor, the Maria Mitchell Association is holding open house at the Memorial House on Vestal Street on the afternoon of July 28th, from 2 to 5 o'clock. Tea will be served. All are cordially invited to meet Miss Wright and have their copies of "Sweeper in the Sky" autographed.

Hostesses will be Miss Edith Folger, Curator of the Memorial House, Mrs. Charles L. Amey, grand-niece of Maria Mitchell and Assistant Curator, Mrs. C. Neal Barney, Miss Virginia Barney, grand-niece of Maria Mitchell, Mrs. F. W. Davis, President of the Maria Mitchell Association, and Mrs. E. U. Crosby, Chairman of the House Committee.

Miss Wright has made extended visits to the Island in recent years while collecting facts about Maria Mitchell and Nantucket history. With its record of the life of the first woman astronomer in America, Miss Wright's "Sweeper in the Sky" combines much interesting material, well salted with humor, about the early Quakers, whaling merchants, and other prominent figures of Nantucket.

On Tuesday afternoon, July 26th, Miss Wright will be a speaker on the program of the annual meeting of the Nantucket Historical Association. She will speak on William Mitchell, the remarkable father of Maria Mitchell.

"Sweeper in the Sky" was given an excellent review in the Dallas (Texas) News by Mrs. Helen Oehler, who is well known on Nantucket through her visits to the island, on one of which she gave a talk at the Annual Meeting of the Historical Association on her greatgrandfather, Dr. Charles F. Winslow, of Nantucket.

It is a fitting time to reprint Mrs. Oehler's review, which appeared in the Dallas News in March, 1949:

"RARE SUCCESS STORY; GREAT WOMAN SCIENTIST."  
by Helen Oehler.

"If you happen to find yourself with an hour or two, and a copy of Helen Wright's *Sweeper in the Sky*, don't be afraid of its sub-title: 'The Life of Maria Mitchell.' True, a biography of an astronomer, especially one in bluestockings, could be a pretty dull affair, the more so when done by another woman scientist.

"That's where Miss Wright will surprise you. Who would expect an astronomer, associated, the publisher tells us, with such solid institutions as the United States Naval and the Mount Wilson observatories, concerned with mathematical calculations and formulas, to be at the same time a charming and skillful writer?

"A life of Maria Mitchell, handled by someone less adroit, would make either a very slender volume or one which betrayed its padding. The Lady Astronomer who astonished the world by discovering a comet in 1847, and who was herself astounded by all the ensuing honors, a gold medal from the King of Denmark, membership in learned societies where for decades she was the only feminine participant, left little behind of the stuff of which biography is made. Of Quaker stock, with simple tastes, her life was uncluttered with non-essentials. But she had selected a romantic spot in which to be born and a glamorous period in which to live.

"And Helen Wright, who might have become a readable historian had she been less interested in other worlds than this, has made the most of the possibilities of the colorful whalers of Nantucket and the famous folks on two continents who knew and came to revere this unobtrusive Vassar professor.

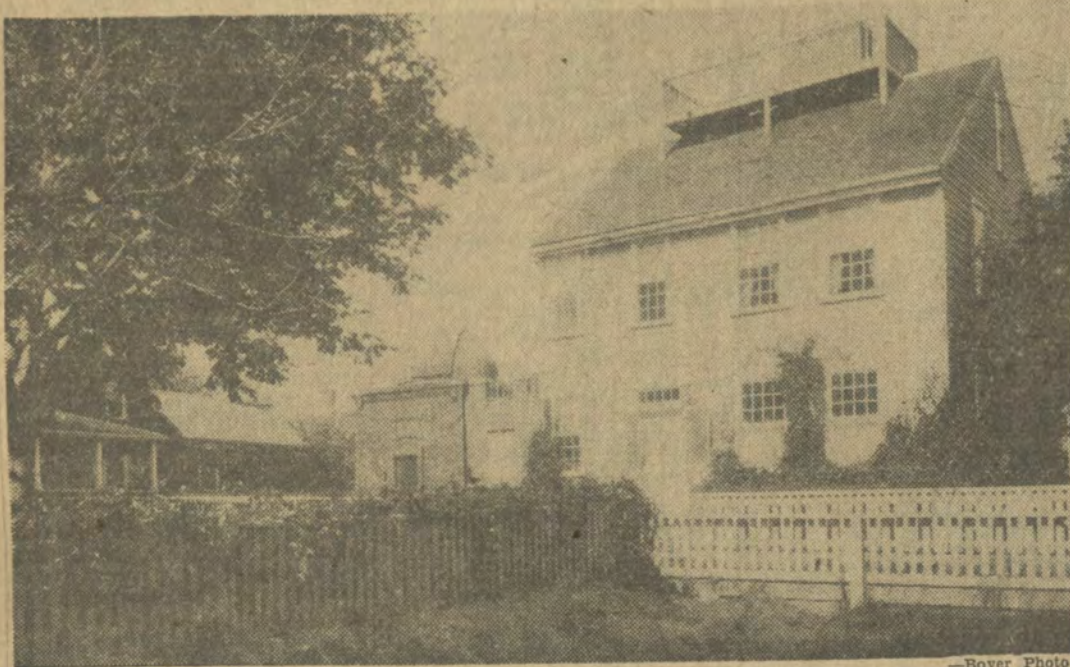
"It was a dreary February afternoon in Dallas when the *Sweeper in the Sky* came my way. Immediately I was back in Nantucket, on a brilliant July morning. I'd walked out Main Street—whose famous two blocks are considered by architects the finest in America—and turned off into Vestal Street to pay my respects to the memory of my illustrious and very, very distant kinsman. (Miss Wright quotes her as remarking that she had five thousand cousins on the island!) Little had I dreamed on that remembered day that I would meet Miss Mitchell's successor, Margaret Harwood, director of the Maria Mitchell Observatory. But meet her I did, and she gave so generously of her time and of herself on that memorable day that I wondered what I could do to indicate my appreciation.

2ND PAGE OVER

Feb. 12, 1949



# Nantucket Astronomer's Life Described in Absorbing Book



—Boyer Photo

Here is the Nantucket birthplace of Maria Mitchell, with the observatory shown in background. It was from the roof of this house that

she discovered the comet in 1847, an accomplishment for which she was awarded a gold medal by the King of Denmark.

## Maria Mitchell First American To Find Comet

**SWEEPER IN THE SKY**  
Helen Wright  
Macmillan

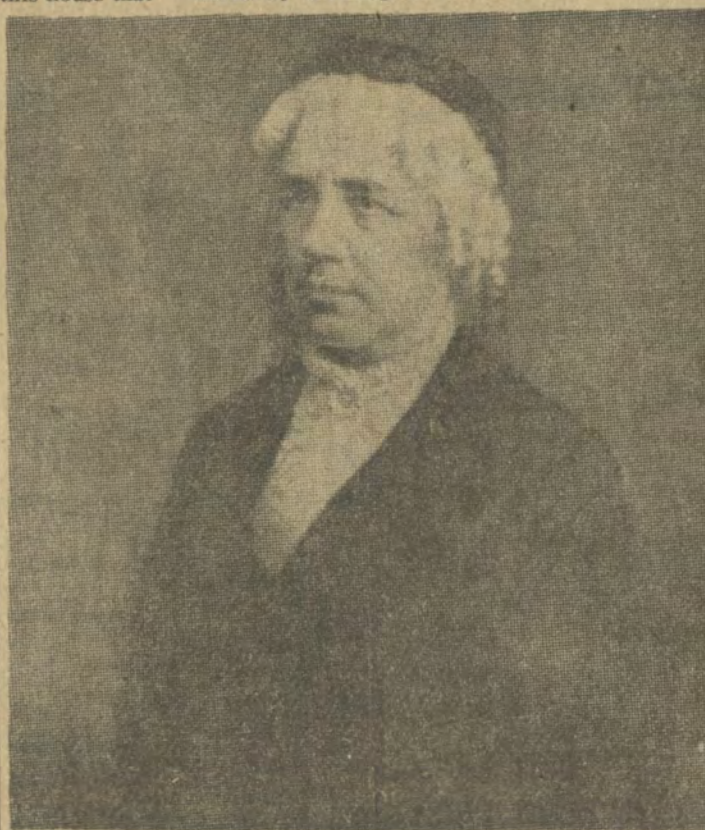
Nantucket well may be proud of this absorbing and handsome volume on the life of one of its most famous and remarkable natives, Miss Maria Mitchell, America's first woman astronomer.

This first biography of the internationally-known star-gazer is presented in chronological yet personal and thorough form by Miss Helen Wright, an associate of the Maria Mitchell Observatory on Nantucket and who, perhaps, was influenced by the spirit of Maria Mitchell while studying at Vassar. Miss Wright has achieved a fascinating, intimate and sympathetic re-creation of Miss Mitchell's life.

### Discovered Comet

Miss Mitchell was an extraordinary woman. She was noted throughout America as the first American and the first woman in the world to discover a comet (1847). For this discovery she received a gold medal from the King of Denmark. She also was honored for being a pioneer professor at Vassar Female College and an ardent worker for the advancement of women. Her other vocations included mathematician, surveyor, philosopher, librarian, teacher, publisher, and first woman computer for the American Ephemeris and Nautical Almanac.

Miss Wright has accomplished a remarkable task in filling the gaps of Miss Mitchell's life. The main source of her material is from the Maria Mitchell Library on Nantucket, which contains her diaries, her letters and notebooks and lectures. Brief sketches of the famous life, written by her brother, Henry Mitchell, have been included. Many anecdotes and intimate human glimpses also are included.



—Portrait by E. T. Billings

MARIA MITCHELL

Miss Wright, explaining her search for material for this book, says in the preface, "In the tracing of the life of Maria Mitchell this path has led first to Nantucket, then to other New England towns and cities. It has wandered across the border into New York State. It even has gone into the West, and the South of the 19th Century, and into the England, the France, the Italy and the Germany of the same period."

### Author Is Grateful

Gratitude for the "friendly co-operation of the people of Nantucket who have welcomed me, an off-islander, and to Edouard Stackpole, president of the Nantucket Historical Association," is expressed by Miss Wright. Other Nantucket associations who assisted with notes about Miss Mitchell were the Atheneum, the Whaling Museum, the Pacific Bank and the Maria Mitchell Association of Nantucket.

Maria Mitchell was born in a gray-shingled house on Vestal Street, Nantucket, in 1818. She died in 1889 in Lynn. She was always a modest, enthusiastic, keen observer, frankly outspoken, independent and self-disciplined woman.

Proof of her observant and imaginative qualities began at the age of 12 when she accompanied her father, William, to the roof of their home to watch an eclipse. At 14 she was publishing the *Juvenile Inquirer*. Maria found many diversions to occupy her mind, such as roaming the moors, writing, reading and dreaming, although the Quaker religion frowned upon these activities.

"In other places in the 19th Century," Miss Wright explains, "Maria's intense love of the skies, which began when she was 14, would have been considered queer. On Nantucket where such knowledge was imperative it was considered only right and natural."

### Watched Skies

For months Maria and her father "swept the skies" from the white-railed "walk" above their home. To these two, it was their observatory. Maria's study was at the foot of the garret stairs—a small closet exactly 1 yard square. Although not too studious by nature, Maria (because of her mathematical ability) became a school assistant teacher in 1834. The next year she opened her own school charging \$3 a quarter! In 1836, she was offered the post of librarian "at \$60 the first year, \$75 the next and \$100 thereafter."

She helped her father build the new Nantucket Observatory atop the bank building which became the Mitchell home in 1836. Later she built other observatories behind the Coffin School and one in Lynn, which later became her home.

While the lithesome, dark-eyed girl explored the skies with her father, she also became familiar with the land by becoming a surveyor. In 1834 she left the Friends who "denounced her questing spirit to attend yet never to join, the Unitarian Church." The greatest discovery of all, the first comet in America, was discovered by Maria in October 1847. A year after the discovery, she was presented a gold medal from the King of Denmark. From that year on, Maria's work was shared by the entire world.

To relate all the activities of the fascinating Maria, even in brief form, would require endless writing. From her astronomical discoveries she made new friends, explored new lands and probed the skies with her telescope whenever she could.

### Named Observatory Director

When the Vassar College Observatory was founded in 1865, Miss Mitchell became its first director. There she gained fame as a great teacher. Education might still profit today from her far-seeing, liberal ideas, her belief in the importance of research and her own use of it as an educational tool.

The native Nantucketer's astronomical observations, her biographer points out, suggested hypotheses "which are extraordinarily interesting in the light of modern knowledge." Finally, as an ardent leader in the woman's rights movement and president of the Association for the Advancement of Women, Miss Mitchell proves an inspiring heroine.

Other honors, not mentioned above, which Maria Mitchell received included:

American Academy of Arts and Sciences	
First woman elected to membership	1848
American Association for the Advancement of Science	
Proposed for election by Agassiz:	
only woman unanimously elected	1850
American Philosophical Society	1869
Social Science Association,	
Vice-president:	1872
Association for the Advancement of Women	
President, Syracuse Congress	1875
President, Philadelphia Congress	1876
Women's Anthropological Society,	
Honorary member	1889
Hanover College, Ind.,	
LL.D.—probably the first such degree given to a woman by an American College	
Rutgers Female College,	1853
Honorary Ph.D.	
Columbia College,	1870
LL.D. at centennial celebration	1887
Republic of San Marino,	
Medal of merit	1859
Cantos of Switzerland,	
Medal for signal service to science voted	1885
World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition (centennial)	
Certificate of Award	1885
Diploma of Honor, for publication of notes on the satellites of Jupiter and Saturn	1885
Public Library of the City of Boston	
Name placed on its frieze	1893
Women of America	
Gift of telescope	1858
Hall of Fame, New York University	
Tablet to the memory of Maria Mitchell unveiled	1907
Bronze bust of Maria Mitchell unveiled	1922

Especially interested in astronomy, the author has been associated with the Vassar College Astronomy Department, with the U. S. Naval Observatory in Washington, the Mt. Wilson Observatory in Pasadena, Cal., and the Maria Mitchell Observatory on Nantucket.

S. A. M.

New Bedford Standard

MARCH 27, 1949.



**THE NEW COMET.** We understand that Miss Mitchell has computed the elements of the orbit of the comet discovered by her on the first of last October; and that her results, with those of Prof. Pierce and of Mr. Bond, together with a notice of the central passage of the comet over a bright fixed star in the Constellation of the Dragon and of other interesting phenomena in connection with the same, will be prepared by William Mitchell, Esq., the father of the lady by whom the wanderer was first seen, and will appear in the next number of the American Journal of Science.

The Comet, we are informed, will pass its perihelion on Sunday next, at the distance of about thirty-two millions of miles from the sun, and will probably become again visible on the other side of the sun in the course of the next month.

The Boston Traveller says, that by papers recently received from England, it appears that the comet was discovered in that country, at Cranbrook, by Mr. W. R. Dawes, on the seventh of October, six days after it was seen in this place, so that to Miss Mitchell most probably belongs the honor of its discovery. We are not astronomer enough to know whether the path in which the comet is travelling is such as to enable scientific observers to calculate its orbit and the period of its return, so that they may be able to recognize it when it again makes its appearance—but if such is the fact, we hope it will, by common consent, be called after its discoverer. Why not Miss Mitchell's Comet—as well as Halley's, or Encke's, or Biela's.

The Traveller says further, that this is the eighth comet seen in this country before information thereof had been received from Europe, and as no notice has appeared that it was observed on the continent before the 1st of October, it is believed to be the second yet discovered in this country before having been seen elsewhere.

Nov. 13, 1847

**THE NEW COMET.** The National Intelligencer of the 2d, publishes a communication from Lieut. Maury, which contains the Ephemerides of the Comet discovered by Miss Mitchell, of this place, on the 1st of October.

Lieut. M. says: "This comet has passed its perihelion, and is now visible just before day. It is the first comet, I believe, with an American name; certainly the first entitled to be called after an American lady. Miss Mitchell, of Nantucket, discovered this comet on the 1st of October last; on the 3d, D. Vico, of Rome, discovered it; and on the 11th, Professor Rumker, of Hamburg, discovered it; each discovery being made without the knowledge of the other."

We are not a little proud, that to a Nantucket observer belongs the honor of being the first original discoverer of a comet in this country.

1847

### "Maria Mitchell" Reading Benefits Association.

The Natural Science Department of the Maria Mitchell Association sponsored the dramatic reading of Margaret Georgia Fawcett's biographical play of Maria Mitchell at St. Paul's Parish House, 69 Main Street, on August 9, 11, and 12. The proceeds will go to the Natural Science Department.

The play epitomizes, by means of the Mitchell family, the spirit of the Nantucket Quakers in Maria Mitchell's day. Maria Mitchell (Isobel Price), a pioneer, moreover, in the emancipation of women from prejudices against their higher education, searches for knowledge of truth. With her father, William Mitchell (Carl Bingham), she studies the heavens, for "the heavens declare the glory of God." Maria, in the family, is the life and the admired and appropriately evaluated leader. The scenes are laid in the wing of the Pacific National Bank, where the family lived, for William Mitchell, Maria's father, was the cashier; in the "Hall" over the Bank, and in the Athenaeum.

It is Maria who, fully conscious of the significance of her actions, has managed to have her sister Anne's (Ann Gillespie) piano moved from the nearby shed to the Hall above the Bank. Brother Andrew (Edward Hyde) succinctly quoting from the Friends Discipline, warns that their father may be "read out of Meeting" for having in his house "an instrument of the Devil." Miss Phoebe is appropriately alarmed. Anne, expressing faith in Maria, clarifies the situation. William Mitchell and his sedate wife (Kate Conway), coming home, hear the word. Mother, a spirit adherent to the spirit of the Discipline but in sweetness as wife and mother, warms to the sage principles of her husband's honesty and to Maria's independence of thought.

Jared Hussey (Howard Barber), a stern Elder of the Meeting, after dealing in grave solemnity with William Mitchell for having the "devil's instrument" in his home comes to perceive the integrity of William's argument that birds sing, that the home should be the center of family enjoyment and that one should live in the spirit, not in the letter of the Discipline. He is, therefore, willing to report to the Meeting that William, the Custodian of the Meeting's real estate and Clerk of the Meeting, had no part in bringing the piano into the house. John Bolton (Robert Hanna), a suitor of Maria's, draws out her independence of thought. His vacillation that comes from his adherence to the letter more than to the spirit of the Discipline fails him not only with Maria, but also with Maria's sensitive, gentle friend, who, in response to a "leading" has come to Nantucket to live with her uncle, Jared Hussey, and his motherly wife, "a comfortable sort of person," Hannah Hussey (Adeline Chadwick). But she does develop for us an understanding of Maria's devotion to search for truth.

To her the comet which she discovers as a formula of nature is a "hymn of praise to God" and the medal which she receives for her discovery only a recognition of progress gained by both her father and herself.

With her father, as with all people with whom she came in contact, Maria's love responded to the truth in others. In a scene in the Athenaeum Maria introduces good books to two natural little girls, Patience Bunker (Frances Ruley) and Deborah Swain (Susan Wilson), who feel at home with her and she smiles as she claims to have been the first to have seen the medal "now all Nantucket will know I have the medal." Maria supports their childlike but accurate criticism of "loud talking" in the Library by Eunice Hathaway (Shirley Perkins), a town gossip, who is unconsciously humorous, for to Maria truth is accuracy.

As Professor of Astronomy at Vassar College, severely she deals with the matter of an error in confusing the position of a star by one student, Emily Stoddard (Lee Martin), and rebukes another, Fanny Tisbury (Nancy Briard) for a miscalculation of one hundredth of an inch. William Mitchell comes in and tells of Maria's miscalculations when she became his assistant at 12½ years of age.

Recognition of Maria's pioneer work for the advancement of higher education for women comes from Mrs. Cantwell (Frederica Slemmons), a fiery suffragette, who proclaims Maria a great contribution to the cause of women's freedom, a pioneer in a great army.

A. A. S.

Aug. 14, 1954

### Maria Mitchell Association Holds 53d Meeting Here First Time

The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association re-elected Charles G. Snow president at its 53d annual meeting held for the first time on Nantucket.

It will be the second term for Mr. Snow who succeeded Mrs. Francis W. Davis last year.

Named as vice presidents were Walter S. Hinchman, William C. Brock and Richard M. Hinchman. Other officers named were Mrs. Allen Norcross, secretary, Miss Marjorie Barrett, treasurer and Miss Virginia Barney, Dirk Brouwer, Edward O. Gardner, Mrs. Roger Merrill Jr., Dr. Lee Jay Whittles and Miss Helen Wright, managers.

Members of the Association heard annual reports prepared by Miss Barrett, treasurer during 1954, Miss Margaret Harwood, director of the Observatory, Dr. Edwin M. Betts, director of Natural Science, Miss Marjorie Weirich, curator of the memorial house and Mrs. Allen Norcross, librarian.

The Board of Managers announced that the Fiduciary Trust Company of Boston would act as custodian of investment funds. The board named Dr. Betts as director of natural science, Mrs. Norcross as librarian and Mrs. Joseph King as curator of the Memorial House.

In her report to the Association, Miss Harwood said the regular open nights of the Observatory began Monday, June 21 and ended September 13 and two other evenings were reserved for members of the Association.

She said that on June 30 two telescopes were set up on the grounds of the Old Mill and 70 persons watched the partial eclipse of the sun projected on screens. There were some clouds but they moved away at mid-eclipse and the sun could be seen with six-tenths of its diameter obscured by the moon.

Professor Charles H. Smiley, director of the Ladd Observatory of Brown University, told of several eclipse expeditions at a lecture August 19.

Mrs. Arthur Vincent and James W. Hanner were Summer assistants at the Observatory and on October 1 Mrs. Andrew Lowell became technical assistant. Mrs. Charles Swain works part time. On open nights, Terrence Laundry and Mrs. Vincent were in the observatory, Frank Mather and Roy Murley were at the gate and John Murray ran the stereopticon projector and helped Miss Weirich and Miss Eileen McGrath in the library.

Miss Harwood said that a class of five Boy Scouts meets one night each week to study for their astronomy merit badges. A Girl Scout is also studying for a merit badge and a Navy See Bee is receiving instruction in navigation. During the year there were 1,420 visitors to the Observatory she reported.

Dr. Betts said, in his report to the Association, that the Lydia S. Hinchman House was opened for visitors June 15 through September 11. He said that 1,673 persons visited the daily exhibits and that 485 came to see the flower show, 185 to open house after Friday evening lectures and 130 to the tea and preview of the art exhibition.

A bird course for adults, taught by Mrs. Clinton Andrews, was offered for the first time. It ran from August 2 to August 12 and 19 persons attended.

Miss Ethel Hill was in charge of the nature classes which were attended by 123 children, 59 of them Nantucket residents. Since the course has been offered, the report said, the enrollment in the nature classes under Mrs. Andrews has increased each year.

The report listed the following illustrated lectures which were given during the season: "In Bright Africa," by Miss Weirich of New York City; "Whaling Industry in the Hawaiian Island" by Mrs. Lorna Iauka Watson of Milton, Mass.; "Birds of Florida" by Dr. Walter Boyd and John Boyd

(Continued on Page 4)

May 13, 1955



## Director of Local Observatory Describes Maria Mitchell's Life.

Miss Margaret Harwood, director of the Maria Mitchell Observatory here on Nantucket for the past 44 years, was the speaker at the regular meeting of the Rotary Club of Nantucket, Wednesday noon, and gave an excellent description of the life of Maria Mitchell and the founding of the local observatory as well as a resumé of her own work and studies.

First telling the Rotarians some of the little-known details of Maria Mitchell's life, Miss Harwood said the famous woman astronomer was born on Nantucket, and her family lived here for generations. The Mitchell family owned whaleships until the war of 1812. Up to that time they were well-to-do, but their ships were lost during the war.

William Mitchell, Maria's father, planned to attend Harvard College, but the war of 1812 put a stop to that. He first became a cooper, and later had a farm in 'Sconset before becoming a schoolteacher. Miss Harwood said Mr. Mitchell was a very remarkable man, for while being almost entirely self-taught he was looked up to and his opinions were highly respected in scientific circles, both in this country and abroad.

Maria Mitchell was the third of 16 children of William and Lydia Mitchell, and, of the children, was the one most interested in scientific study. Miss Harwood also mentioned Maria's youngest brother, Henry, who did considerable research with the study of ocean currents. This research resulted in the founding of the U. S. Hydrographic Office, she said.

The education of Maria Mitchell was in the hands of her father and Cyrus Peirce, following which she took up the study of astronomy, being almost entirely self-taught in this subject. In her later years she was asked to become the first professor of astronomy at Vassar College. Miss Harwood said, when she first came to Nantucket 44 years ago, she was amazed at the number of elderly persons who spoke highly of Maria Mitchell, her teachings at Vassar having been long remembered.

Maria Mitchell's work in astronomy was termed "very remarkable" by Miss Harwood, who said Maria predicted things which were discovered only 10 to 15 years ago. She made several predictions regarding sun spots, but the most remarkable, according to Miss Harwood, was her statement that one of the moons of Jupiter has an atmosphere. Miss Harwood said this was only confirmed definitely in very recent years, through the use of modern scientific instruments, while Maria Mitchell had only a refractor telescope to aid her.

The Maria Mitchell Association was started by three of Maria's cousins about 1900, Miss Harwood said, when it was found that former students of Miss Mitchell came to the island to see where she had been born. The house was preserved as a memorial, and a project was started to make it into a scientific center. It was found that the three telescopes used by Miss Mitchell had been given to her nephews, but these were finally returned.

The dome to house the five-inch telescope was built in 1908, but the present building housing the observatory was not constructed until 1925. Miss Harwood said she was chosen from several applicants to be the director of the observatory, first coming to the island in 1912. At that time the director was supposed to be on the island for six months, the other half of the year being available for work at other observatories.

Describing the Maria Mitchell Association, Miss Harwood said Gerald Snow is now the President, Miss Marjorie Barrett the treasurer, and Mrs. Allen E. Norcross the secretary. Very popular is the Association's scientific library, which is open to the public two afternoons a week during the winter months. School children are among the greatest users of the library, which includes books on nearly all phases of science.

The Natural Science Department of the Association was started before the observatory, Miss Harwood said, due to the very unusual flowers to be found on the island.

Telling of her work at the observatory, Miss Harwood said the observatory is different from others in the country, because the same people do the observing that do the research. Research is done chiefly by making photographs and then studying them, she said, and one night's work can provide sufficient data to keep astronomers busy for 5 to 10 years.

Repeating that few astronomers now make their own photographs for study, Miss Harwood smiled and said she likes both observing and research, despite the fact that this means she must work both day and night. At the beginning of her talk she said she did not know how or why she became of Bethesda, Md.; "Animals of South Africa" by Jan Juta of New York City; "Heather on Nantucket" by Mrs. Walter D. Blair of Rochester, N. Y.

The Natural Science Department paid its respects to the late Miss Grace Wyatt, director of the department from 1934 to 1949, who died last Summer. The department lauded Miss Wyatt's zeal, interest and work which, it said, "left an indelible impression for good on the department".

Reporting for the Memorial House, Miss Weirich said the structure was visited by 44 members of the Appalachian Club of Boston on May 30. The Memorial House formally opened June 15 and 873 persons visited the House during the season, Miss Weirich said. She said that one elderly couple who had visited many famous places in the United States declared that they were taking more away from Nantucket than any other spot they had visited.

A special effort was made to get Nantucket residents to visit the House and eight per cent of those who came to the House were Nantucketers, according to the report.

Nantucket children were encouraged to come and special emphasis was placed on the "toy room." One of the season's projects was the organization of the children's room into an apartment. Another was the attempt to resume history and other class visits from the High School. Fourteen members of a special class on

Nantucket history came to Memorial House and it is hoped that next year the custom will become more popular, the report added.

Mrs. Norcross reported that the library had continued its work through the year with Miss McGrath and Mrs. Paul Boehlert as assistants.

The report said that there were 4,058 visitors for the year and that 2,570 were Summer visitors and 1,488 Islanders. The circulation for the year was 2,461 books and 105 magazines. Summertime saw 1,138 books and 37 magazines borrowed from the library and in the Winter 1,323 books and 68 magazines were taken out.

Mrs. Norcross said there were several exhibits presented, one of which consisted of 25 juvenile science books in a show for children. There was also an exhibit of work done by some of the children in the eighth grade. The projects displayed were Marcella Flemming's "Cotton and Wool," Linda Lusk's "Cloth," Jean MacDonald's "Farm Animals," and Edward Williams' "Aluminum."

The library was open daily from June 15 to September 15 and on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the rest of the year.

The report of the membership committee listed 30 new members, one sustaining, eight life, four contributing and 17 annual. There were 10 deaths, the report said.

The Association expressed its appreciation to retiring members of the Board, Alexander E. Hoyle and Philip B. Heywood, for their years of service on the board of managers.

Miss Wright and Mr. Gardner, new members of the Board, were welcomed by the Association.

Feb. 14, 1956

## 50th Anniversary of Maria Mitchell Observatory Tuesday.

Fifty years ago next Tuesday eight young ladies stood on Vestal Street at the entrance to the Observatory on a rainy afternoon and with undampened spirits sang a song the chorus of which went something like this:

"She leads us through the mazes of hard Astronomy.  
She teaches us Mutation and the Laws of Kepler three,  
Th' inclination of their orbits and their eccentricity,  
Good woman that she be.

And our mental perturbations she sootheth like a balm,  
Good woman that she am.

And from the path of virtue she never strayed fur,  
Good woman that she were."

The occasion was the dedication of the new Maria Mitchell Observatory and the song, set to the tune of "John Brown's Body," came as a finale in an afternoon of tribute to the building's famed namesake.

Next Tuesday on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Observatory's dedication the buildings on Vestal Street will be open to the public all day. The Celebration Committee of the Maria Mitchell Association under the chairmanship of Alice P. Amey are planning special exhibits on astronomy, and from 4 until 6 in the afternoon the Hinchman House will hold Open House with refreshments. The following representatives of the Association's various departments have worked with Mrs. Amey on the program: Mrs. Francis W. Davis, Miss Marian Ethel Hill, Dr. Dorrit Hoffleit, Mrs. Roger Merrill, Mrs. Molly Norcross and Miss Marjorie Weirich.

At 8 in the evening there will be a meeting of unusual interest at the Nantucket Atheneum. Mr. Charles Snow, President of the Association, will welcome the members and their friends; Dr. Dorrit Hoffleit, Director of the Observatory, will introduce the speakers.

Neither of the two speakers of the evening really needs an introduction to a Nantucket audience. From 1912—just four years after the July afternoon mentioned above—until 1957, Miss Margaret Harwood served as Director of the Observatory, working in conjunction with the Harvard University of Astronomy. On Tuesday she will outline the ways in which the Island and the Observatory have grown up together.

Mr. Edouard A. Stackpole, former President of the Historical Association and Associate Editor of "The Inquirer and Mirror", Curator since 1953 of the Marine Historical Association, Mystic Seaport, Connecticut, will talk on Nantucket's history. Mr. Stackpole was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1951 to produce his history of Island whalers, *The Sea-Hunters*.

The Assembly Hall on the second floor of the Atheneum has been reserved for the Association by Louis Jelleme. During Maria Mitchell's term as librarian here she welcomed in this same hall such Lyceum lecturers as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Thoreau and Louis Agassiz.

DdeB



Through the instrumentality of Thomas Cullen Roberts and Kenneth Webb—both well-known to many of our readers, Mr. Webb through the fact that he spent his boyhood summers with his family at 'Sconset, and Mr. Roberts through the fact that he is handling the advertising for the Nantucket publicity committee—we have received a copy of the complete script of the radio program prepared and produced by Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, Inc., in which "du Pont" presented in its "Cavalcade of America" program the story of Maria Mitchell, of Nantucket Island, the first woman scientist.

A large number of our readers listened with keen interest to the story as it was presented over the radio last week and Messrs. Roberts and Webb felt that the script of the radio program would be acceptable for The Inquirer and Mirror, inasmuch as it is an excellent tale of Miss Mitchell's career, of her discovery of the comet which brought her fame, and of her later life at Vassar and in Lynn. The following is from the copy of the radio program of "Cavalcade of America" which was sent us:

Announcer—This evening, the du Pont Cavalcade tells the story of an American girl who astonished the world with her discoveries through a telescope—Maria Mitchell, first American woman to win renown as an astronomer.

If our listeners could find telescopes powerful enough to do the trick, probably a lot of them would aim at the site of New York's World Fair this Saturday to see what's going on in preparation for the 1939 *World of Tomorrow* exposition. It will be a red-letter day in New York City, because they're having a pre-view of the Fair in the shape of a great parade with miles and miles of floats showing in miniature form how most of the Fair buildings will look a year from now. Six hundred motor vehicles and two hundred thousand marchers are to parade through New York streets and wind up at the fair grounds. Among the floats will be one representing the building du Pont will have at the Fair.

The du Pont Company's exhibit will be located only a few steps from the Theme Center of the Fair—and the building already is beginning to rise. Called the du Pont "Wonder World of Chemistry," it will be a symphony in white and blue, with a circular entrance court in the center of which will stand a 100-foot tower of glass and gleaming metal, in the form of chemical apparatus, boiling, bubbling and flashing with colored vapors streaming from the top—like an experiment from a giant's laboratory.

Inside of this building the "Wonder World of Chemistry" literally will unfold before your eyes. With the help of animated working models and demonstrations, trained lecturers will explain how du Pont scientists transform such simple raw materials as coal, salt, cotton and wood cellulose, vegetable oils and minerals into a variety of products that contribute often in unseen ways, to your comfort and convenience. Thus helping to make good the du Pont pledge—"Better Things or Better Living—through Chemistry."

Narrator—Maria Mitchell, America's first woman scientist, was born August 1, 1818, of Quaker stock, on the historic island of Nantucket, off the coast of Massachusetts. Her father was an accomplished amateur astronomer, and at an early age, Maria displayed unusual interest in the constellations. By the time she was seventeen, her mathematical knowledge had progressed far beyond that of her teachers, and when she was twenty-one, the Nantucket selectmen recognized her exceptional ability by placing her in charge of their library, the Athenaeum.

One day, shortly after she had received this appointment, two of her friends tiptoe into the quiet library in search of her.

## Radio Script Which Presented Story of Maria Mitchell.

Martha (whispering)—Did you see her, Abigail?

Abigail—She is at that desk in the corner—bent over a book, as usual.

Martha—Poor Maria. I should as soon spend my days in the churchyard, as in a quiet library like this.

Abigail—I suppose she'll be upset because we interrupt her but we'd better give her our message at once.

Martha—Abigail! Do you think she could possibly be reading one of those wicked novels from England?

Abigail—We'll peek over her shoulder and see. Quietly now—

Martha—She can't even hear us. Why—the book is nothing but figures. Mathematics.

Martha—Why, Martha! And Abigail! I didn't see you come in.

Martha—You were too busily absorbed. Whatever are you reading, Maria?

Martha—Captain Bowditch's book—"The Navigator."

Abigail—Maria, do you enjoy books like that?

Martha—Of course, I do. It's a brilliant work, Abigail.

Martha—But books like that are meant for men. You'll get brain fever studying such things.

Martha (laughs)—It's not as deep as all that, Martha. Did you come for a book?

Abigail—We came to tell you how distressed Jonathan Andrews is that you refused to go with him to Captain Macy's social tonight. You're breaking his heart, Maria.

Martha—Nonsense. I told him I'd be glad to attend if it stormed. But, as you see, it promises to be a fair, clear night.

Abigail—What has the weather to do with it? A lovely moonlight night and a handsome young man would be my ideal.

Martha—On clear nights, Abigail, I must remain on the roof at the telescope. Every day here at the library I am learning how to make more accurate observations—and at night, I study the movements of the planets in the sky. It's the only way to test my knowledge.

Martha (in disgust)—Jonathan told us we wouldn't succeed.

Abigail (indignantly)—Jonathan Edwards is one of the finest young men in Nantucket, Maria! If you really prefer to remain on the roof, gazing at stars, then I warn you, a fever has touched your brain. Come, Martha, we had best leave this gloomy library before we, too, are affected.

(Music)

Narrator—Despite the scorn of her less serious-minded friends, Maria Mitchell continued to study mathematics in the Nantucket Library, and continued to spend every clear night at the telescope on the roof. And the young men of Nantucket learned that Maria Mitchell's first love would always be astronomy. In her few leisure moments, however, she enjoyed social gatherings as greatly as her brothers and sisters, and now, on the evening of October 1, 1847, a pleasant party is in progress at the Mitchell home. The young people are grouped around the piano, singing, while Maria's mother and father are seated on the sofa.

Mother (in a low voice)—William! Has thee seen Maria? She is not with the others at the piano.

Father (chuckling)—Thee should know as well as I, where she can be found.

Mother (sighs)—At the telescope even tonight? I am worried about Maria, William. When she was a child, I thought her interest in astronomy was a passing fancy. But the years have passed, and she is interested in naught else.

Father—I am proud of our daughter, Lydia. I believe her knowledge of astronomy is as great as that of Professor Bond at Harvard College!

Mother—Professor Bond is a distinguished scholar. He is a man, with a man's brain. Thee will repent such a vain boast about your daughter!

Maria (from distance)—Father! Father!

Abigail—Here comes Maria to join us!

Jonathan—We need your voice in this song, Maria!

Maria (slight distance)—Will you excuse me for a few minutes longer? I must speak with my father at once!

Abigail—Is there something strange in the skies tonight, Maria?

Maria—Only an observation I wish my father to check.

Father—I'm coming, Maria.

Martha (laughing)—Whenever I've looked through Mr. Mitchell's telescope, I see only cloudy specks.

Jonathan—Oh, Maria, can't you postpone your star gazing?

Maria—Won't you all sing again? Please don't wait for me!

(Jonathan protests. Singing starts up again.)

Maria (in an excited whisper)—Father! Will thee please come up to the roof at once! There are clouds in the sky! A storm is blowing up.

Father—I'll come, child, but what is remarkable about a storm over Nantucket?

Maria—There is not a minute to lose! Please, come quickly!

Father—I can't mount these stairs as fast as thee.

Maria—There! Thunder! Thee must see it before the storm breaks!

Father—See what, Maria?

Maria—The new comet!

Father—You have observed a new comet?

Maria—Yes. I saw it last night but I did not wish to mention it. I thought it might have been a nebula.

Father—But tonight! Its position has changed?

Maria—Yes. Oh, hurry, Father, the clouds are gathering fast. I'll lift the door for you.

Father—Yes. It looks like we're in for a nor'easter.

Maria—Look into the telescope. See? Look closely.

Father—Is there certain of its position?

Maria—Yes. It is nearly vertical above Polaris about five degrees.

(Rumble of thunder grows louder)

Maria (anxiously)—Does thee see it? I fear the storm is going to break.

Father—Nearly vertical above Polaris... about five degrees. Yes! Yes! I see it, Maria! Thee has discovered a new comet! Thee must announce this to the world at once!

(Wind and thunder increase in volume)

Maria—But, Father, I should be so humiliated if I should be wrong.

Father—Astronomy is an exact science. Thee knows from thy mathematical computations that this is a new comet, does thee not?

Maria—Yes. That I do know, without a doubt. But, surely, I am not the first to have observed it.

Father—Whether or not thee is the first, is of small importance. (The thunder increases) Now, I believe that the time has come for thee to take thy rightful place among the scientists of the world! Thee must permit me to write to the Harvard Observatory tonight.

(Wind and thunder in full. Music)

Narrator—That night, Mr. Mitchell wrote to his friend, William Bond, Professor of Astronomy at Harvard College, and Maria promptly forgot the new comet. Then, three months later, the distinguished President of Harvard College, Dr. Edward Everett, journeyed to Nantucket to call on Maria and her father. He brings with him the latest astronomical journal from Europe—and now, he is discussing it with the Mitchells.

Everett—This journal reached Harvard two days ago, Miss Mitchell. It states that Italy's most distinguished astronomer, Father Vicio, of Rome, saw your comet two nights after you did.

Maria—My comet, Dr. Everett? Then I was the first to observe it?

Father—I was sure of it!

Everett—It was indeed your comet, Miss Mitchell, and the first to be discovered by telescope in many years—the first indeed since 1831, when the King of Denmark offered his prize. Yet, unfortunately, the Danish gold medal will go to Father Vicio of Rome.

Maria—He is a famous scientist. I am only a young woman. Far better that he receive the medal.

Father—But it is unjust, Dr. Everett, I had forgotten the Danish medal. I fear I should have written to the Danish consul at once.

Everett—That was not your principal mistake, Mr. Mitchell. The regulations state that the discoverer of a telescopic comet must send the letter by the very next mail, to be eligible for the award. What a pity you did not comply with the rules!

Father—By the next mail, Dr. Everett? But—

Everett—Miss Mitchell observed the comet on October first. But your letter did not leave Nantucket till October third. That delay of one day cost your daughter the honor of being acclaimed throughout the scientific world.

Maria—I am satisfied to have been the first astronomer in the world to have seen the comet, Father. Fame and gold medals are of little importance.

Father—But, Dr. Everett! That letter did leave Nantucket by the next mail!

Everett—I don't understand. A full day passed.

Father—Even you off-islanders know our Nantucket storms, Doctor. A storm came up the very next night Maria observed the comet. It continued all the next day, and the first mail to leave the island was on the morning of October third!

Maria—Yes, that is true. Don't you remember, Father, the skies were growing cloudy when I asked thee to come to the roof to observe the comet?

Father—Thee is right, Maria.

Everett—Then there is no time to be lost! I must write at once to our American consul at Denmark! The medal has not yet been awarded. Technically, you have complied with the regulations. You deserve that medal, Miss Mitchell, and for your sake—and for the honor of America—I intend to do everything within my power to see that you receive it!

(Music)

Narrator—One day, at the close of the year, 1849, Maria's friends, Martha and Abigail, come again to the quiet Athenaeum to seek Maria. But this time, they do not tiptoe.

Martha (excitedly)—Maria!

Abigail—Maria! Your father wants you to come home at once!

Maria—My father!

Martha—We were strolling along Vestal Street and we chanced to knock at your door to see if you were home—

Abigail—And Professor Bond of Harvard College was there!

Maria—What's wrong? Is someone sick?

Martha—No, you silly! Professor Bond has brought you a medal from the King of Denmark, Maria! You are famous!

Abigail—And we think it very unfair of you not to tell us! Professor Bond says you discovered a new comet—and that you're the most famous woman scientist in America.

Maria (laughs)—'Tis you two who are silly! I observed that comet many months ago! Why, it was that very October night when you were at our house. That comet is past and forgotten, in my mind!

Martha—Maria Mitchell! You certainly don't intend to sit here studying those stupid figures, when there's a gold medal from a king at your house?

Maria (laughs)—Why should a gold medal make such a difference? I'm the same person I was before the medal arrived! I do thank you both for coming to me with this good news! I am pleased—deeply pleased—but

over



don't you see, the joy of discovering a new comet was satisfaction enough to me! (Girls protest) Besides, who should tend the library if I closed it now? So please tell my father I'll return home at the usual time—closing time at the Athenaeum. He will understand.

(Music)

Narrator—The announcement that Maria Mitchell had been awarded the gold medal of the Danish king, marked the turning point in her life. She was hailed throughout the world as one of its leading scientists and astronomers. Other honors followed. She was made the first woman member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 1857, she spent a year in Europe at the invitation of leading scientists.

In 1861, following the death of her mother, she left Nantucket and moved with her father to Lynn, Massachusetts. Here she set up a small observatory and planned to spend the rest of her life in quiet study. But one day, in 1865, when she was forty-seven years old, a visitor came to the house. His visit was to mark a second turning point in her life. The maid announces him, as Maria is finishing her noonday dinner.

Young Girl—A gentleman to see you, Miss Mitchell.

Maria—Did he tell you his name, Sophie?

Girl—It's Vassar, Miss. Mr. Matthew Vassar.

Maria—Matthew Vassar? Why—he's the gentleman who has chartered a college for young ladies! I'll see him at once!

Girl—Yes, Miss. I'll call him. Will you come in, sir.

Vassar—Thank you.

Maria—Mr. Vassar! I am happy to see you. Please come in.

Vassar—I hope you will forgive this intrusion, Miss Mitchell.

Maria—It is a pleasure. I have been so interested in reading about your college for young ladies. I wish you all success in your undertaking.

Vassar—Miss Mitchell, I have come to you today to tell you that the success of Vassar Female College depends in great measure upon you!

Maria—Upon me? You can't be serious, Mr. Vassar.

Vassar—I have come to ask you—no, to plead with you to become the first Professor of Astronomy at Vassar College.

Maria—Why, I have never taught anyone in my life! I should never be a suitable professor for any college.

Vassar—You are better known and more deeply respected than any woman scholar in America. I shall be very frank, Miss Mitchell. If I can announce to the world that a scientist of your reputation is one of our first professors, it will inspire confidence in the college. It will assure us of the public support we must have.

Maria—But, it is out of the question. I am not a young woman, Mr. Vassar. The best years of my life are past. I have planned to spend the rest of my life at my telescope—and with my books.

Vassar—Miss Mitchell, one of the most prominent men in the country has wagered me that a scientist of your reputation would never demean herself by teaching in a college for girls.

Maria—But that is not true! I believe teaching is the worthiest profession in the world. My fear is that I am not capable of it.

Vassar—Another gentleman has promised to contribute a large sum of money to the college the day he hears that Miss Maria Mitchell has consented to become a professor!

Maria (bewildered)—I don't know what to say, Mr. Vassar. I had never dreamed of such a thing.

Vassar—I know that I am asking you to make a great personal sacrifice in giving up your independent study, but I am not being selfish—I am asking you to do this in the name of the thousands of American women who are eager for knowledge.

Maria—You overestimate my abilities, Mr. Vassar.

Vassar—You have set a brilliant example of what an ambitious woman can accomplish! Will you not follow a new path now, and help open the door to a college education to all women who desire it?

Maria—Do you realize that you are asking a woman of forty-seven to pioneer along a new and difficult path, Mr. Vassar? If I succeeded, it would bring me greater satisfaction than any work I have ever done. But it is a fearful responsibility, molding the minds of young people. I must have time to think. May I give you my answer within a week?

Vassar—Thank you, Miss Mitchell. I beg you to consider carefully, for your decision may well mark a turning point in the history of higher education for American women. I cannot express it more earnestly, or more truthfully.

(Music)

Narrator—The next morning, after breakfast, Maria and her father are in the sitting room, discussing Matthew Vassar's invitation. Maria is still bewildered.

Maria—As thee knows, Father, I am heartily in sympathy with Mr. Vassar's ideals. I am weary of the common belief that women's brains are not capable of book-learning—but, I am not a teacher.

Father—I wonder if thee is not evading the principal issue, Maria? The sacrifice of thy personal ambitions is far more serious to thee than thy inexperience as a teacher, is it not?

Maria—It is equally serious, I will confess. My life is so well established.

The greater part of my time is my own for study and observations.

Father—And teaching is a full-time occupation. It would mean a sacrifice, Maria. It would mean that thee may never make any further scientific discoveries, but, Mr. Vassar has offered thee a great opportunity to develop hundreds of receptive minds.

Maria—But I do fear I should fail as a teacher.

(Knock at the door)

Father (laughs)—Thee shall have to lock thyself in a tower soon if guests arrive even at breakfast time!

Maria—They rarely come so early. I'll open the door.

Woman (gushing)—My dear Miss Mitchell! You are Miss Maria Mitchell, are you not? I saw your picture in all the papers when you won that gold medal!

Maria—Yes, I am Miss Mitchell. Won't you come in? This is my father.

Woman—Thank you. I have come all the way from New York to see you. I know you are a very busy person, but there is one question I must ask. I won't even tell you my name. I am fairly well-known—I am embarrassed about asking this.

Maria—Is it a question about astronomy?

Woman—Certainly! Miss Mitchell, this is my problem. I'm a widow. My poor husband died two years ago—and now, there are two men who insist they are in love with me. I admire them both, but I simply don't know which to marry! That's what I've come to ask you?

Maria (astounded)—But, my dear lady, how could I possibly advise you about your personal life?

Woman—You tell fortunes, don't you?

Maria—I, tell fortunes? Of course not!

Woman—But aren't you Miss Mitchell, the astronomer?

Maria—Oh! Now I understand. You thought I read fortunes by the stars?

Woman—I've been told you know everything about the stars! What can you tell if you can't tell fortunes?

Maria—I can tell when the moon and sun will rise. I can tell you the physical characteristics of the planets, and their relationship to each other—

Woman—Why! I never heard of such a thing! All the way from New York to hear when the moon and the sun will rise! Good day, Miss Mitchell. I'm sorry I disturbed you. There's been a mistake. I've been imposed upon! (Door slams)

Maria—Father! Did thee hear that?

Father (laughing heartily)—Yes, I heard it.

Maria—That settles it.

Father (still laughing)—I know what thee means, daughter.

Maria—I shudder to think of the future of America if every woman is as ignorant as that woman from New York! I may lack experience as a teacher, but I believe I can teach the young ladies of Vassar the difference between the science of astronomy and gypsy fortune telling!

Father—Don't be too critical, Maria. Remember there were no colleges for girls when she was young. And remember, too, that Mr. Vassar's college is only an experiment, which may fail.

Maria—It mustn't fail! American women must have education! Father, I have spent more than twenty years in selfish study. What good is my knowledge if it can't be shared with others? Mr. Vassar has offered me a golden opportunity. I shall write to him, today.

(Music)

Narrator—At the age of forty-seven, Maria Mitchell embarked on a new career. Her fears that she would fail as a teacher were groundless. For twenty-two years, until she reached the age of sixty-nine, she remained the most beloved professor at Vassar College. And she devoted every minute of those years to her students, with never a thought of enhancing her personal reputation as a scientist.

Now, in 1888, at seventy, in ill health, she is living alone in retirement at her home in Lynn, Massachusetts. Two visitors have just been admitted to the sitting room. Maria greets them politely.

Maria (in a feeble voice)—Won't you come in?

Mrs. Warren—Miss Mitchell, do you remember me? I am Mary Armstrong, Class of 1869. I am now Mrs. Warren.

Maria—Mary Armstrong! My first astronomy class! Of course I remember you! You were the pretty girl who told me you had elected astronomy because you loved to gaze at the stars.

Mrs. Warren (laughs)—I was sadly disillusioned! We all thought astronomy would be a popular course until we discovered we were expected to study mathematics.

Maria—And yet, how you all worked at mathematics! I was so proud of you.

Mrs. Warren—Miss Mitchell, this is my daughter, Anne. She is entering Vassar this year.

Maria—Your daughter? To think I have lived to see a second generation enter Vassar! How do you do, young lady.

Anne—I am so happy to meet you, Miss Mitchell. Mother has told me Vassar would never be the same without you. (She laughs.) And father says I'll never be the woman mother is, without you for a teacher.

Maria—Your father? I don't seem to remember. Did I ever meet him, Mary?

Mrs. Warren (laughs)—No, Miss Mitchell. But like every husband of every Vassar graduate, he has heard nothing but Miss Mitchell since we were married.

Maria—I'm afraid one never grows too old to enjoy flattery. Take care, Mary. You will turn my head.

Mrs. Warren—Any girl who ever studied under you, Miss Mitchell, knows better than to pay idle compliments! I am speaking only the truth as you taught us to see it. Anne has heard all about you. She knows, as every Vassar graduate knows, the great personal sacrifice you made in giving up a brilliant career to devote your time to us. Anne wanted so to meet you, and I have always wanted to tell you how grateful we are for your help in establishing the college at the expense of your personal fame as a scientist!

Maria—What matter if my name does not live? What matter that I did not go on with my own work? I am content. Some of my pupils may some day do far greater work than I was capable of. And I know that some

of the others will continue to seek the truth in every phase of life, as I urged you to do in that first astronomy class so many years ago.

Anne—Father says that mother was as rattle-brained as most women till she studied under you, Miss Mitchell. He says she doesn't remember much about astronomy, but you did teach her how to think clearly!

Maria (half sobbing)—One of my pupils has forgotten her astronomy, but she has learned how to think! That is the finest compliment I have ever received. It is a greater reward than any teacher should dare expect. (Her voice breaks) Thank you, my child—Thank you!

(Music)

Narrator—Throughout her life, Maria Mitchell worked for the joy of working, with no thought of fame or material reward. None the less, recognition came to her during her lifetime. She was the first woman to be elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Her death came in 1889. In 1902, her birthplace on Vestal Street, in Nantucket, was purchased as a museum and observatory by the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association, and in 1905, she was elected to a permanent place in the Hall of Fame.

For her untiring efforts toward the advancement of scientific knowledge, and for her pioneering help in securing a higher education for American women, du Pont salutes her as a brave leader in the Cavalcade of America.

MAY 7, 1938.

IN MEMORY OF MARIA MITCHELL.—At the Arbor Day exercises of the Providence Public schools, the graduating class of the girls' department in the high school, dedicated their tree to Maria Mitchell. An excellent essay, containing an accurate sketch of this great woman's life, was read by the class president, Miss Alice F. Tourtellot. The following dedication was given by the class:

"We dedicate this tree to Maria Mitchell, a woman whose life is not to be measured by the worth of mere work done by brain or figures. It is not that she penetrated the nebulae, found the dark companions of great stars, weighed the sun, and was the familiar of comets, so much as that the effect of her character and deeds, of her thoughts and aspirations extended and will extend through generations of girls, not merely with the tradition of a great name, but with living, actual influence, still broadening when she is dust, till its last ripple breaks on the shores of eternity itself."

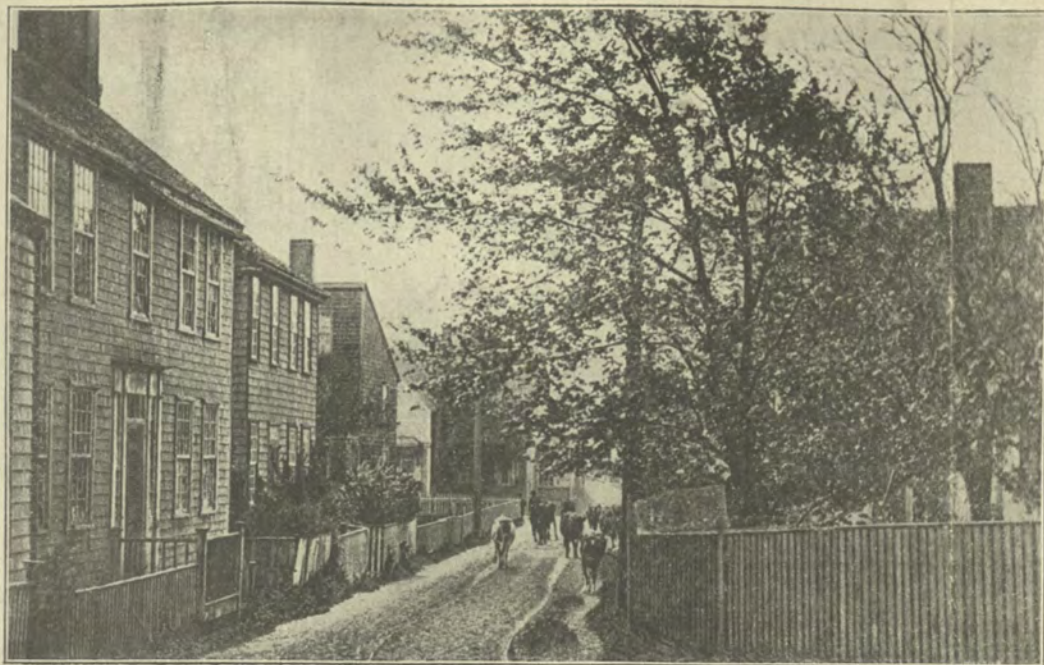
May 22, 1890

#### The Maria Mitchell Portrait.

The portrait of the late Prof. Maria Mitchell, which was hung in place at the Athenaeum on Monday evening, 13th inst. has been much admired by all who have seen it. The portrait is a fine piece of work by E. T. Billings, a well-known artist of Boston and is a wonderfully good likeness of the noted astronomer of whose fame and achievement Nantucket is so justly proud. The picture was formally presented to the trustees of the library at their last quarterly meeting, by the committee, with a fund of nearly \$500 for books.

July 23, 1891





AN OLD TIME SCENE. DO YOU RECOGNIZE THE LANE?

#### A Bit of History.

The Frederick Gardner house and lot, on Vestal street, was sold at public sale last Tuesday. This property adjoined that of The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association, and formerly belonged to Peleg Mitchell, senior, the grandfather of Maria Mitchell. The house once occupied the land on Centre street, where the Methodist church now stands. Mr. Mitchell sold the land to the Methodists and removed the house to its present site. After the death of Peleg Mitchell, senior, and his wife, in 1832 and 1833, it was occupied by the family of Capt. Isaac Brayton, whose wife was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell. Upon the removal of Capt. Brayton's family to Ohio, it was sold to Isaac Mitchell, a brother of the late Joseph Mitchell. Sometime after his removal from the island, it came into the possession of Frederick Gardner, from whom it descended to his daughter, Cornelia Coffin. It has now been purchased by a granddaughter of the original owner, Peleg Mitchell, senior, who, it is said, after taking the house down, grading and fencing the lot, will donate it to The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association.

Sept. 8, 1906

**THE MARIA MITCHELL MEMORIAL —**  
We are glad to learn that the Maria Mitchell Memorial Committee are greatly encouraged by the prompt and generous responses to their appeal to our people everywhere. Not only have the contributions been liberal, but the expressions of lively interest in the cause have been numerous and cheering. Says one ready contributor: "I am delighted that this movement is inaugurated, and believe it cannot fail to call out a most generous response." Bear in mind that *your name*, with even the smallest gift in money, expressive of your sympathy and approval, is far better than silence which may falsely bear the seeming of indifference. Give cheerfully and associate your name with what may prove to be a lasting honor and benefit beyond your power to measure.

Feb. 22, 1890

**MARIA MITCHELL ENDOWMENT FUND.**  
—The following letter appears in the *Woman's Journal*:

ELIZABETH N. J., FEB. 13, 1889.  
Maria Mitchell has been the honored professor of astronomy at Vassar College for twenty three years. During this time it has been her heart's desire that the department should be independent and self-supporting. Towards this end, by personal solicitations, she has raised \$5,000; but further efforts on her part are now prevented by failing health.

The Vassar alumnae have taken up the work she is forced to lay down, aiming to complete the endowment of the chair as a memorial to her. Will you help us in the name of your life-long friend and co-laborer, Maria Mitchell?

The sum of \$40,000 will endow the chair. It is proposed to take the \$5,000 raised by Prof. Mitchell, as a nucleus, and to complete the \$40,000, calling it the Maria Mitchell Endowment Fund. The alumnae have raised \$15,000, which, with the \$5,000 already mentioned, makes half of the sum needed. We appeal to the public for the remaining \$20,000. Running parallel through Maria Mitchell's life, with her interest in science has been her interest in woman. By their gifts to the memorial of her, pupils own the obligation of science to her. Can you not secure from the women of the United States a similar expression of what Maria Mitchell has done them?

EMILY JORDAN FOLGER, Com.

Feb. 28, 1889

#### MARIA MITCHELL MEMORIAL.

The committee take this means to express their thanks to the following persons who have thus far sent in their contributions to this fund, many of which have been accompanied by expressions of interest and approval, very encouraging to the promoters of the movement:

##### LIST OF NAMES.

I. Gardner Chase,	Benjamin Coffin Chase,
Judy E. Chase,	Hannah B. Robinson,
Jarrie E. Allen,	Ellen S. Swain,
Fannie B. Allen,	Susan A. Starbuck,
Sarah C. Allen,	Deborah G. Brown,
Lucy Allen,	Lucie B. Tyng,
Thomas Macy,	Herbert Swain,
Lydia H. Macy,	Gilbert Swain,
Sarah B. Swain,	Elizabeth Starbuck,
Bessie S. Wing,	Elizabeth B. Gardner,
David Whetton Swain,	Emma L. Crosby,
Eunice B. Swain,	Clementina S. Wing,
Sylvester Swain,	Elizabeth Coffin,
Linda S. Barney,	Henry T. Wing,
Ruth Burgess,	Mary F. Swain,
Linda S. Burgess,	Moses Joy, jr.,
Alanson S. Barney,	Charlotte M. Gardner,
Emily Coffin,	Sarah J. Baker,
Mary Coffin,	Louise S. Baker,
Harriet M. Coffin,	Robert F. Gardner,
Harriet L. Hommedieu,	Lauretta F. Gardner,
Moses S. Beach,	Helen A. Gardner,
Rebecca Farnum,	Sarah E. Gardner,
Mary Farnum,	Helen Kruz,
Fanny Lord,	C. L. Marks,
Joseph H. Allen,	Della Coffin,
Henry James,	Mary B. King,
C. A. J. Mann,	Hannah M. Hussey,
Matthew Barney,	Harriet K. Daubham,
Ellen C. Sherman,	Lydia H. Barney,
Elma Folger,	Alida C. Avery,
Virginia M. Sharp,	Mrs. Wm. Westgate,
Phoebe Ann West,	Elizabeth Westgate,
L. B. Hussey,	Ann E. Gorham,
Isabel Chaffin,	Sarah S. Swain,
Sarah J. Folger,	John Riddell,
Paulino Echeverria,	Eben W. Tallant,
Judith Mitchell,	Nathaniel Tallant,
Roland B. Hussey,	Eliza Drew Gardner,
Lucretia M. Gardner,	Rebecca A. Gardner,
Odirope Swain,	Margaret G. Yale,
Ella W. Swain,	Martha Baxter,
Chester O. Swain,	Elizabeth C. Crosby,
Charles B. Swain, jr.,	J. B. Bacon,
Fred W. Swain,	Mary C. Sanford,
Charles B. Swain,	Fred C. Sanford,
Leslie Earl Swain,	J. A. Kite,
Forrest J. Swain,	Albert G. Brock,
William Lee Swain,	Eliza Nevius,
Harriet P. Hazard,	Florence E. Carnable,
Bertha Hazard,	Wm. Watson,
Sarah S. Sargent,	James Watson,
Emily S. Sargent,	Eunice B. Lamberton,
Phoebe C. Pitman,	Isabel D. Kimball,
Maria T. Swain,	Sarah F. King,
Helen B. Worth,	Mary A. L. King,
Amelia M. Coffin,	Annie G. Brigham,
Frederic Hussey,	Wm. M. Bates,
Sarah F. C. Baxter,	Sara K. Bates,
Caroline E. White,	Samuel Gilston King,
Annie W. Lilcox,	

The committee will thankfully acknowledge all future gifts in the same way, and will gladly receive any corrections of or omissions in the above.

Any contributions, however small, makes the donor a member of the association.

T. C. DEFRIEZ,  
ELLEN O. SWAIN, } Committee.  
E. G. M. BARNEY,

Aug. 2, 1890



# The Nantucket Journal

THURSDAY MORNING, JANUARY 9, 1890.

## Maria Mitchell Memorial.

At the recent annual meeting of the proprietors of the Atheneum, a motion was introduced of so general interest that we give it entire, feeling confident that its purpose will appeal strongly to the pride and liberality of each one of the wide circle of readers of the Nantucket papers. The motion is as follows:

Because Nantucket is the birthplace of the late Maria Mitchell, professor of Astronomy in Vassar college; because Professor Mitchell was for twenty years librarian of the Nantucket Atheneum—the center of literary interest in this town since its foundation—during which period she left upon the community an impression of her character and influence for good, for all time; because of the honor reflected upon her native place from the world-wide fame won by her life-long labors in the cause of science and reform, and the honest pride in this fame felt by every worthy son and daughter of Nantucket—for these reasons it seems eminently fitting that the representatives of this institution should attempt to provide it with some suitable memorial of her.

It is therefore moved that a committee of three be appointed by the chair, from the trustees and proprietors, the chairman of which shall be the president of the board of trustees, to take measures for procuring a durable and life-like portrait of Professor Mitchell, to be preserved in an appropriate place in the Atheneum building, under the control of its board of trustees; that this committee be hereby desired to confer with the family of Miss Mitchell, requesting their approval of the movement, and to offer to every descendant of Nantucket, whether resident or non-resident, the opportunity of contributing, in smaller or larger amount, to a fund for this purpose; that this committee be hereby authorized to carry the purposes of this motion to their consummation; that if, in the manner suggested above, a sum of money be raised, larger than is required for the above named purpose, the residue be applied as the nucleus of a constantly increasing fund to be called the Maria Mitchell Memorial fund and to remain as a perpetual memorial of her—the income of which shall be used for the purchase of books for the library, and that this fund be, as all other funds of the Nantucket Atheneum are, under the control of its board of trustees, subject to the above mentioned condition; that the contributors to this fund shall constitute the Maria Mitchell Memorial Association, having for its trustees and officers the trustees and officers of the Nantucket Atheneum; that this committee be hereby authorized to issue to each contributor a contributor's certificate, signed by the president of the board of trustees, entitling him to membership in the Maria Mitchell memorial association and to exhibit the portrait to friends at all times when the Atheneum and library are open to proprietors; that this committee be hereby requested to report at a quarterly or some other future meeting of the board of trustees, and at the next annual meeting of the proprietors.

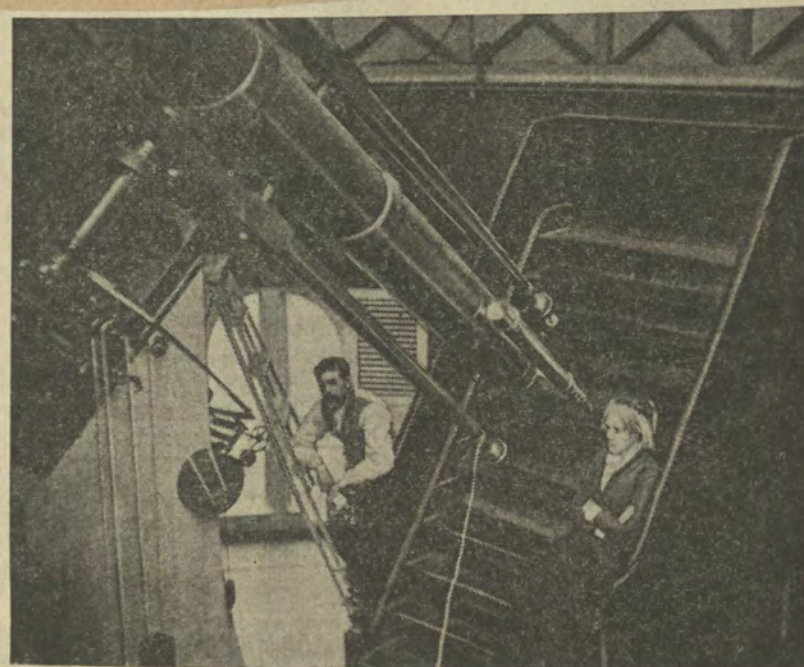
The motion was unanimously carried and it is earnestly hoped that every descendant of our island will feel a sense of personal responsibility that the amount of this fund shall, in the present, reflect credit on the discernment and liberality of our townspeople, and in the future shall be a constantly growing tribute to the memory of one so honored and respected here where her early life was passed.

Let no one be withheld from giving from a feeling that the offering must be small, but let everyone contribute according to his ability or desire; thus making the memorial one of all our people, and securing for ourselves an abiding interest therein; thus aiding to hold in grateful and appreciative remembrance one whose early labors are so closely allied with our own history; thus showing ourselves worthy sharers in a fame, unique in that history, which has helped so much to associate the name of our island home with the ideas of exalted character, the best culture, and a noble enthusiasm for progress.

Any member of the committee, or of the board of receivers organized by them, will gladly credit contributions for the above mentioned fund. Should offerings come from sources other than those indicated above, they will be accepted with grateful thanks.

THADDEUS C. DEFRIEZ, President.  
ELLEN O. SWAIN, (address this winter, 145 Clinton St., Brooklyn, N. Y.)  
ELIZABETH G. M. BARNEY, Treas. of Com. (this winter at 22 Chatham St., Lynn, Mass.) Proprietor's Committee.

Receivers—Miss Rebecca Ann Gardner, Mrs. Catharine Starbuck, Mrs. Edward W. Perry, Mr. Albert G. Brock, Miss Elma Folger, Miss Annie Chinery, Mrs. Benjamin Robinson, Miss Sarah F. Barnard, Librarian.



Prof. Maria Mitchell in the Observatory at Vassar College, June, 1878.

Sept. 6, 1959

## Life of Maria Mitchell.

We have received from the publishers, Lee & Shepard, Boston, a copy of the Life of Maria Mitchell, recently compiled by her sister, Mrs. Phebe M. Kendall, is bound in cloth and illustrated with a fine portrait of Miss Mitchell. The work treats quite fully of her early life at Nantucket, her studies and discoveries, her travels in the Old World and her work at Vassar college. It also contains interesting extracts from her diary and correspondence.

The character and personality of Maria Mitchell was so strong, and her services so valuable, not only to Vassar College and its pupils, but also to the great body of young women everywhere, in her efforts for their higher education and their advancement into the more intellectual paths previously held almost entirely by men, that this sketch of her life and correspondence, by her sister, Mrs. Kendall, will be welcomed by thousands of her pupils, friends and admirers, and be an inspiration to others.

As an astronomer she took a foremost rank, making many valuable discoveries, and receiving the gold medal from the King of Denmark for the discovery of the comet of 1848.

As the only woman ever admitted a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the only one ever admitted into the papal observatory at Rome, she occupies a unique position, and her reminiscences, as told in her letters, of the foremost scientific and literary people of Europe and America, with all whom she came in contact, are extremely interesting.

The book is on sale at the store of Miss P. E. Olisby, Centre street.

1896



#### The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association.

The question has repeatedly been asked, why the Maria Mitchell Scientific Museum, now successfully organized, should have a natural history department. In the minds of those who knew Maria Mitchell intimately, possibly such a question would not formulate itself; but for those who think of her as interested only in astronomy, it may be well to say that Maria Mitchell was a person of the broadest sympathy with all science. Although her own life-work lay in the field of astronomy, she lamented what she considered the narrowing influence of limiting one's interest to one special subject and she constantly urged upon her hearers, both in her classes and elsewhere, the broadest possible outlook upon the world of Nature. It has therefore been thought a fitting monument to the memory of the woman who by her character and by her scientific achievements honored her country and her native island, to organize a memorial that shall represent other branches of science besides astronomy.

The desire of the Association in organizing the museum is to form a centre of scientific value to all persons connected with or in any way interested in Maria Mitchell or in the island, and the hope is that before many years the museum may contain specimens of the various forms of plant and animal life, and of every variety of mineral which the island affords, and that the library of the Association may include such works as shall meet the needs of all students who may wish to consult them.

#### Lectures on Botany.

Dr. Joseph A. Cushman, curator of the botanical department of the Boston Natural History Society, will deliver his third lecture in the botany course of the Maria Mitchell Association, Thursday evening, August 19. Dr. Cushman's first lecture, which dealt chiefly with pond life, was illustrated by microscopic views of minute forms of life found in various Nantucket ponds. A collection of plants typical of the ponds, swamps, meadows, road-sides, moors, salt marshes and beaches of the island was used in his second lecture to illustrate the various ways in which these plants are adapted to their localities. The third lecture will be a continuation of the second, the whole series dealing with the general subject, "The Balance of Nature."

Dr. Cushman is an entertaining speaker, and a man of wide experience in his field of work, and the lectures are very interesting to those who either enjoy or desire an acquaintance with the flora of Nantucket.

#### Fern Talk.

At the rooms of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association on Thursday evening, the 23d, Miss Alice W. Wilcox, a graduate of Vassar College, and Instructor in Biology at Brown University, gave an interesting talk on Ferns, before some of the friends of the association. Miss Wilcox illustrated her talk from life, with the aid of the microscope, as well as from dried specimens in the Herbarium of the association. She referred those especially interested in the subject to a book in the library of the association, "How to know the ferns" by Frances Theodora Parsons.

Miss Wilcox requested that those cognizant of fern habitats on the island should communicate with the curator of the association in order that a complete collection of nature ferns may be made.

#### Library Dedicated.

The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association dedicated Thursday afternoon, the fifteenth, its new Library building on Vestal street. This building was the one in which William Mitchell, Maria Mitchell's father, taught the first free school in Nantucket. It has been entirely remodelled and now is a library room, of which the motto is "Come in, rest awhile, and study something." The speakers were Miss Annie J. Cannon of Harvard College Observatory, who has long been an active member of the Astronomical Committee, and Professor Walter S. Hinchman, of Haverford College. They were ably introduced by Mrs. Stokeley Morgan.

The library is now open to visitors. It contains popular and reference books on astronomy, botany, gardening, butterflies and birds.

#### Lecture.

Under the auspices of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association, F. Schuyler Mathews gave a unique and extremely interesting lecture Monday evening on "Wild Birds and Their Music." Over 400 people attended. The lecture was illustrated by Mr. Mathews' own water color sketches of the birds and by imitations of the bird-notes.

The calendar for Mr. Mathews' botanical course is as follows:

Monday, July 24—"How to Identify Wild Flowers"—at the Memorial, 3 p. m.

Tuesday, July 25—"Evolution of Color in Plants"—at the Memorial, 3 p. m.

Wednesday, July 25—Field Trip to Tuckernuck. Registration on or before Monday, July 24.

Thursday, July 27—"Evolution of Color in Plants"—at the Memorial, 3 p. m.

Friday, July 28—"How to Identify Wild Flowers"—at the Memorial, 3 p. m.

#### Maria Mitchell Bird Club.

At the last meeting of the Maria Mitchell Bird Club, Miss Elizabeth Gardner, one of the older members, described the gulls and terns that frequent the shores. The standard of the bird study done this summer has been so high that an appreciative friend made a contribution that the prizes might be proportionately more valuable than they have been before. Miss Barbara Melendy won the first prize and Miss Nancy Boyd the second. The prizes had been well earned through originality and thoughtfulness in the programs for the meetings, keenness of observation in bird study and care in manner of presenting experiences.

The members decided to continue studying through the winter.

#### The Flora and Vegetation of Nantucket.

The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association invited those interested to see an exhibition of fresh wild flowers last Friday at the Memorial. The opportunity was an unusual one and many were those who took advantage of it. One hundred and fifty varieties of flowers were shown.

Under the auspices of the Association, Dr. John Harshberger, of the University of Pennsylvania, lectured Wednesday evening on the vegetation of Nantucket. He distinguished between vegetation and flora; vegetation he defined as the conditions and manner of growth of plants and flora as a list of plants. Dr. Harshberger showed a number of interesting slides illustrating the kind and manner of growth of plants on the beaches, the heath-lands, and in the swamps. He suggested that Nantucket conditions were peculiarly suited to the cultivation of the Siberian rose, *Rosa rugosa*, the hips of which are very palatable, fresh or cooked. Further, he prophesied that until the pines had spread over most of the heath-land, forming a shelter, no success would be had in the endeavor to reforest Nantucket with trees other than the pine.

Dr. Harshberger's classes in Botany for beginners will commence Friday, August 20th, at 2.30 p. m., at the Memorial.

#### Lectures in Botany.

MRS. M. L. OWEN, by invitation of the Nantucket Botanical Society, will give a course of twelve lessons in Botany, at the Unitarian Vestry, commencing Wednesday morning, 16th inst. These lessons are adapted to both beginners and those who are familiar with the study. Lectures to commence at 8.30, A. M., every day except Saturday. Tickets for the course, \$2.00, for sale at the store of Mary P. Swain; single tickets, 20 cents, may be obtained at the door of the vestry.

#### Lectures at the Maria Mitchell Association Library.

The Natural Science department of the Maria Mitchell Association has had two lectures this season, and is making plans for others during the remainder of the season.

On Friday evening, July 16th, Dr. Dewees Runk of the University of Virginia delivered a lecture on "Seaweeds". He pointed out that seaweed are algae, and that algae are classified into four groups: the green, the brown, the red and the blue-green. Of these, the first three are found in the waters of Nantucket, and the last is abundant but seen only occasionally, as it is microscopic and is visible as "scum" in stone fountains and places of that type.

The usual Nantucket seaweeds live attached to some object and die if they are broken loose. A dried specimen, however, retains the salts that had been in the water in which it had lived, so that if water is added to it years later, it regains its original appearance.

Economically, seaweeds are very important, being used in many ways, such as food in the case of Irish Moss, as a source of iodine and agar-agar, and for the thickening used in making blanc mange.

Dr. Runk illustrated his lecture with living and herbarium specimens, and ended by speaking of a book in the Maria Mitchell library. This book, "Algology", 98 years old, is illustrated with actual specimens collected from the harbor of New York.

The second lecture, July 23, was "A Fisherman's Story" and was given by Clinton Andrews, a resident of Nantucket. Mr. Andrews described old methods of fishing, such as dory fishing, and traced the development to the present day methods. He described and drew diagrams of trawling, explaining how the fish were caught by scraping the nets along the bottom, and then drawing them into the boat. As the fish are brought in, there is a great mixture of cod, flounder, fluke, monk fish and "trash".

Mr. Andrews listed the fish and shellfish obtained in Nantucket waters and explained how each was caught and marketed. He ended by telling some very interesting experiences he had had with leaping fish; porpoises and herring gulls, and in fishing for eels through holes cut in the ice.

On Friday, July 30, Dr. Edgar V. Seeler will speak on "California Wild Flowers" and, on August 6, Mrs. Churchill Humphrey will speak on "Birds of Jamaica".



### Presented by the Author.

The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association has just added to its library "The Glacial History of Nantucket and Cape Cod," a gift from the author, J. Howard Wilson, A.M., Ph. D. The book is fully illustrated and is the most comprehensive account of Nantucket's glacial history yet published. Dr. Wilson has also within a short time presented to the Association a relief map of the island, in memory of his grandfather, the late Capt. David G. Cartwright.

1906

### For The Inquirer and Mirror. MARIA L. OWEN.

It is a peculiarity of all islanders, and one by no means to be discouraged, that when one of their number does a great and noble deed, every other individual member of the community, the old and the young, the grave and the gay, takes on a feeling of "pride," and self-glorification, as if he were himself the author thereof. This fact was forcibly presented to my mind, last Tuesday evening, when Mrs. Matthew Starbuck invited to her parlors a number of intelligent and appreciating guests, to hear a paper read upon John Ruskin.

The essayist, Mrs. Maria L. Owen, one of Nantucket's most gifted daughters, the organizer and president of the Woman's Club, of Springfield, and, in the line of her specialty (viz.: Botany) the authority throughout New England, needs no introduction to our local papers, neither any commendation from the pen of her life long companion. Notwithstanding this truth, however, as I sat watching Mrs. Owen's quiet manner, modestly analyzing the character of John Ruskin, whose life is so much in accordance with her own, the island pride, above alluded to, thought it would not be amiss to present to the public a few points relative to the essayist herself, not that it could, by any means, benefit her, but might perhaps serve as an example for the young women graduates of our high schools and colleges.

Mrs. Owen, aside from her specialties, has ever "kept up" her general studies, not alone for her own profit, but influencing thereby all who came within her atmosphere. A devoted wife and a devoted mother, a thorough house-keeper and pleasing hostess, interested in the wants of humanity and the great question of reform, she yet finds time to investigate and write out the lives of great and exemplary men, presenting the same successfully to learned and critical audiences. What her hero, John Ruskin, has somewhere said of another, can well be applied to Mrs. Owen: "Uttering nothing frivolous, what she says, we believe. Doing nothing regardless, what she does, we trust."

AN ADMIRER.

Sept. 20, 1888

### Work While Playing.

The success which has attended the work of the Maria Mitchell Association of Nantucket in providing that summer resort with a natural history museum has attracted notice to the degree that it is offered as an example for emulation by summer visitors elsewhere. This association was founded five years ago by pupils of Prof. Mitchell of Vassar, enjoying their vacation at the island, and from the annual report just printed it is disclosed that the association has devoted itself to and promoted the study of the animals and plants at Nantucket, making small collections in the neighborhoods, publishing lists of the fossils gathered, and providing lectures and opportunities for study. The association now owns its building, where it has its collections and its books and lecture halls, has two or three small funds to lubricate the management and sustenance, and a telescope, once owned by Miss Mitchell herself, with which to make the nights on the island entertaining and instructive by a peep at the stars and the moon.

The home population of Nantucket is doubly fortunate in this philanthropic scientific enterprise of its summer visitors. They bring not only money to the profit of the local denizens, but establish museums as well, albeit probably the Nantucket good folk will marvel that anybody should spend time, money, and admiration over natural debris and living physical manifestations as common as dirt on the roads. The wonder is that the people have tolerated the new fangled notion. It will be remembered they would have nothing to do with the automobile and still won't. But the movement is thoroughly appreciated and the Nantucket idea will probably spread. It gives the summer visitor something to do. One trouble with summer life away from home is the forced idleness the conditions impose. It frequently is tantamount to ennui. One cannot always bathe or lie in a hammock or sail a boat or play tennis or ride. Nature study prompted by museum work, lectures, and intelligent direction would supply a long-felt want. The success at Nantucket proves it.

Visitors are thus mutually helpful, make more attractive to themselves their summer home, and leave behind physical manifestation of their interest which may enter the iron of the souls of the local inhabitants and eventually lift them above the commonplace. Indeed it is not unreasonable to expect, from the notice and encouragement the Nantucket idea has already received, mention made in the alluring prospectuses that advertise a summer resort of the fact that it contains a natural history museum with complete opportunities for enlarging both its collections and the horizon, activities and philanthropy of the summer boarder.—Boston Advertiser.

Sept. 5, 1908

### Memorial to Mrs. Albertson is Suggested.

The following paragraph appeared in the columns of "Science" recently:

"Mrs. Mary A. Albertson died on August 19 at the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Memorial, where she had been Librarian and Curator for ten years. To her much of the success of the Memorial is due. While the Astronomical work and the Observatory received her faithful attention, she early organized a botanical department. Having been associated with Professor Mitchell in earlier days, she knew her great love for flowers and worked to collect a complete herbarium of Nantucket flora (native and introduced). It is gratifying to report that she lived to see this nearly completed."

To this account may be added the interesting fact that specimens, many of them daily, were brought to the Memorial. These were labeled with botanical and common name, and this department became a Mecca to which flowers were brought for identification. Some of the members who have followed Mrs. Albertson's work during the ten summers when her activity was apparent, have proposed that some permanent memorial to her should be created.

As the "Science" notice states, other departments received her conscientious attention, but nearest to her heart was the flora of Nantucket, and botany and its allied interests became her especial care. The "nearly completed" herbarium was largely the result of her work and energy. Several plans for a memorial have been considered. That which receives most favor is the raising of a fund, to be known as the Mary A. Albertson Memorial Fund, the income of which shall supplement the fifty dollars annually that the association appropriates for instruction in botany. It is the desire of the committee to perpetuate Mrs. Albertson's memory and work, in a way she would like, and it is believed that many will like to contribute one dollar or more to this fund.

Contributions may be sent to Florence M. Bennett, Treasurer, Hotel St. Lorenz, Seventy-second and Lexington Avenue, New York.

The following committee has been appointed, and includes those who first suggested this memorial:

Miss Annie J. Cannon, chairman, Harvard College Observatory; Miss Florence M. Bennett, treasurer; Miss Phebe H. Beadle, Mrs. Herbert L. Burrell, Miss Elizabeth R. Coffin, Mrs. Morris R. Conable, Mrs. Joseph A. Cushman, Mrs. Nellie F. Flynn, Miss Annie Barker Folger, Miss Lydia M. Folger, Miss Lucretia Macy Gardner, Miss Grace Brown Gardner, Miss Florence E. Harpham, Miss Margaret Harwood, Mrs. John F. Havemeyer, Miss Gertrude M. King, Miss Elizabeth S. Kite, Miss Mary Gould Luther, Mrs. Thomas McGraw, Miss Emily Burns Mitchell, Mrs. Stokeley Morgan, Mrs. Henry Taylor Noyes, Mrs. Charles H. Prescott, Jr., Mrs. Washington H. Prescott, Alexander Sterbuck, Hon. William F. Solly, Miss Jane Tobey, Mrs. H. O. Underwood, Prof. J. Howard Wilson, Mrs. Henry R. Wood.

### Mrs. H. G. Chatfield To Exhibit Paintings

An exhibition of flower paintings by Mrs. Harold G. Chatfield will open at the Lydia S. Hinchman House, 7 Milk Street at 10 a. m. Manday and continue for two weeks.

It is appropriate that Mrs. Chatfield's paintings be exhibited at Hinchman House, for it was there that she first discovered the fascinating structural details of flowers and leaves as she studied botany with Dr. Mabel Rice.

Her paintings will include compositions of apple blossoms, cedar, with its blue berries, garden roses,

sweetpeas and driftwood. She has presented a painting of a rare yellow wood lily to the Hinchman House.

Included in her exhibit will be paintings of exotic orchids which were shown in her recent exhibition at the Knoedler Gallery in New York.

This exhibition is one of the new projects inaugurated by Dr. Edwin M. Betts, director of the Natural Science Department of the Maria Mitchell Association.

June 15, 1952

### Walks and Talks

By PROFESSOR WILLIAM VINAL—"Cap'n Bill"

August 22, Nature Walk, Cap'n Bill, Leader  
Leave from the the Hinchman House, 7 Milk Street,  
2:30 p. m. Fee 50 cents.

August 22, Colored Slides and Lectures  
"Pilgrims Our First Naturalists,"  
8:15 p. m. The Maria Mitchell Library,  
Admission 50 cents.

August 23, Nature Walk, The Beach at Low Tide.  
Cap'n Bill, Leader.  
Leave from the Hinchman House,  
2:30 p. m. Fee 50 cents.

Aug. 17, 1946



"Upon my return to Texas I sent her a gift which I felt would be precious to any friend of Maria's, in whatever century, an unpublished letter written on her behalf by a man. This letter was in a sense also a repayment of a debt, for its writer, Dr. Charles Frederick Winslow, had been befriended earlier by Miss Mitchell's father. Recognizing her genius and observing her industry, Dr. Winslow envisioned even greater contributions to science if only the young astronomer had a better telescope. That instrument, the gift of the women of America, may be seen in the observatory next door to the modest home of her childhood, now a museum.

"While this biography of Helen Wright's will be of special interest to educators and to students of the history of women's rights, while it is a book which every Vassar woman will want to exhibit with pride, and while it will make lovers of that Faraway Island 'homesick' past all endurance, *Sweeper in the Sky* has a wider appeal. It is an American success story, out of our golden age, the life story of a great American and of a great and noble woman. It is a book from which to quote and a book to own."

July 23, 1949

#### Reception For Miss Wright.

Miss Helen Wright, author of the Maria Mitchell biography, "Sweeper in the Sky," was the guest of honor at a reception and tea held at the Maria Mitchell Memorial House on Vestal street, Thursday afternoon from 2 to 5 o'clock. Over one hundred people were in attendance, and most of them took advantage of the opportunity to have Miss Wright autograph their copies of her book. As an unusual feature, Miss Wright used for her autographing the pen presented to Maria Mitchell in 1856.

A committee of ladies connected with the various branches of work in the Maria Mitchell Association had charge of the reception. They were assisted by several friends of the group.

July 23, 1949

**THE MEMORY OF MARIA MITCHELL HONORED BY PROVIDENCE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS.**—At the Arbor Day exercises of the Providence Public schools, the graduating class of the girls' department in the high school, dedicated their tree to Maria Mitchell. An excellent essay, containing an accurate sketch of this great woman's life, was read by the class president, Miss Alice F. Tourtellot. The following dedication was given by the class:

"We dedicate this tree to Maria Mitchell, a woman whose life is not to be measured by the worth of mere work done by brain or figures. It is not that she penetrated the nebulae, found the dark companions of great stars, weighed the sun, and was the familiar of comets, so much as that the effect of her character and deeds, of her thoughts and aspirations extended and will extend through generations of girls, not merely with the tradition of a great name, but with living, actual influence, still broadening when she is dust, till its last ripple breaks on the shores of eternity itself."

May 10, 1890

To the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association was given the honor of unveiling the tablet in the Hall of Fame of the University of New York, to the memory of Prof. Maria Mitchell. The president of the Association, Mrs. Mary W. Whitney, herself professor of astronomy at Vassar College, with whose history the name of Maria Mitchell is inseparably associated, spoke the appropriate dedicatory words, prefacing her removal from the tablet of the American Colors surmounted by the purple of the College.

The tablet of bronze, together with those of Emma Willard and Mary Lyon, is mounted on a temporary masonry awaiting the completion of the Colonnade for women, and reads:

Maria Mitchell.  
1818—1889

"Every formula which expresses a law of nature is a hymn of praise to God."

Mrs. Whitney said: Maria Mitchell's words here inscribed, "Every formula which expresses a law of nature is a hymn of praise to God," and her oft repeated precept, "Do not neglect the infinities for the infinitesimals" typify the character of the scientist and teacher to whom this tablet is dedicated. Extraordinary simplicity of thought, as unvarnished as the formula, freedom from self-consciousness like nature, freedom from conventions like reality, these marked her life. She believed that science brought the mind into touch with the power behind phenomena, she believed it elevated character. She was devoted to the education of young women because she wished their lives to be governed by the harmonies of truth rather than the vagaries of tradition, by the "infinities" rather than the "infinitesimals."

The law of nature embodied in conscience was as vivid to her mind as the law of the revolving planet.

If she saw an action to be right she went to its performance with as direct a course as a star to its culmination.

To her mind preception and worship were one, law and duty were one. She was a leader among women scientists, she was a character influence of unique and telling quality.

June 25, 1907

#### Tablet to Maria Mitchell.

The Nantucket Maria Mitchell association was represented by three members at the unveiling on Memorial Day of a tablet to Maria Mitchell in the hall of fame at New York university. Professor Mary W. Whitney of Vassar, president of the association, delivered the address. Associated with her were Mrs. Benjamin Albertson of Philadelphia, curator of the Maria Mitchell house at Nantucket, and Mrs. Charles S. Hinchman of Philadelphia, vice-presidents of the association.

June 1, 1907

**PROF. MARIA MITCHELL IN COLORADO.**—Matilda Hindman, in her correspondence with the *Woman's Journal* of Saturday last, writes as follows concerning the lecture and reception given by and to Miss Mitchell at Denver, Colorado, recently:

Among the noble women who are searching out the great truth that is to make life better for the weak ones, we see in the front ranks, Prof. Maria Mitchell and her sister, Mrs. Kendall of Cambridge, Mass. Though wearied and worn with the long journey of two thousand miles in the hottest of July weather; though weighted with the anxiety and labor of preparing for and taking observations of the eclipse, Prof. Mitchell did not say, as some did: "I have one work, that will I do, and let all others alone;" but, when asked if she would give a lecture for the benefit of the Equal Rights League of Colorado, she most cheerfully consented, and on Tuesday evening, the 30th of July, lectured in the M. E. Church of Denver; the proceeds to be appropriated to advancing the cause of Woman Suffrage in Colorado. The only remuneration she received was the sincere thanks and best wishes of all the friends of right and justice. The lecture and lecturer were spoken of in highest terms by the press and by all who had the good fortune to hear her speak on the astronomer, Herschel. On the Thursday evening following, a reception was given in the parlors of the Grand Central Hotel, to Prof. Mitchell and Mrs. Kendall, the character of which was evidenced by the editorials which appeared in the Denver papers. Prof. Mitchell and her sister made many friends in Denver, and their visit will long be remembered as one of the most pleasing events of the week of the great eclipse.

Aug. 24, 1877

#### The Chosen Artist.

We learn that E. T. Billings, 55 Studio Building, Boston, has been employed to paint the portrait of Prof. Maria Mitchell for the Nantucket Athenaeum. Mr. Billings is a well-known artist, who painted the portraits of Abby May, Mr. Tilden, and several of the distinguished clergymen whose pictures adorn the walls of the Unitarian Association Rooms.

Aug. 18, 1891

The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association to Dr. Henry Chandlee Forman of Decatur, Ga., land at the "Woods" off Madaket Road.

Sept. 25, 1950



HELEN WRIGHT

Correspondence of The Inquirer and Mirror.

Mr. Editor:

After the publication of the life of Maria Mitchell, while the interest in that work was still rife, one of William Mitchell's pupils recalled to mind the names of many contemporary scholars of that noted master. These names were written down at the time, and are now forwarded with a thought that perhaps the perusal of them might prove interesting to some of your many readers, amongst whom may be numbered descendants of these same scholars. Doubtless others of your correspondents can add to the list, which might possibly be committed to the care of the Nantucket Historical Association, if they have not already collected such a list:

Sarah Alley,  
Lydia P. Alley,  
Mary Baker-Winslow (wife of Benjamin),  
Ann Baker-Winslow (wife of Shubael),  
David Baxter,  
Mary Baxter-Colburn,  
Barzillai Burdett,  
Mary Burdett-Folger,  
Eliza Ann Chase-McCleave,  
Phebe Ann Chase-Barnard,  
Charlotte Clasby, } daughters of Reuben  
Maria Clasby, }  
Mary Coffin, (daughter of Christopher),  
Mary Whippy Cushman-Brown,  
Peleg Bunker Cushman,  
Lydia Davis-Westgate,  
Mary Davis-Clarke-Barrett,  
Sarah Davis-Cathcart-Mitchell,  
Sarah Folger-Sherman, (daughter of  
Daniel Folger),  
Daniel Folger, jr.,  
Mary Folger-Myrick,  
Mary C. Fisher-Clark, (mother of town  
crier),  
Anna Gardner,  
Charlotte Harris,  
Amy Herbert,  
Mary Worth Hussey-Gardner-Vincent,  
Susan Harps-Albro,  
Maria Mitchell,  
Sallie Mitchell-Barney,  
Hepzibeth Mooers-Coffin,  
Hepzibeth Ray Myrick-Robinson,  
Elizabeth C. Pinkham-Crosby,  
Mary B. Pinkham-Plaskett,  
Charlotte Plaskett-Kelley,  
Eliza Randall-Chadwick,  
Ann Russell-Joy,  
Edward Russell,  
Eliza Wing Russell-Swain,  
Rebecca Russell-Weeks-Brown,  
Daniel Russell, jr.,  
Lydia Swain-Ramsdell,  
Sarah Swain-Bowles-Sweet,  
Delia Upham-Arthur,  
Elizabeth Worth-Goddard,  
Joseph Winslow,  
Perry Winslow.

These names represent only a few of the many pupils of Friend William Mitchell. Of these, but a small proportion are living today. Even since the preparation of this list was commenced, one of the above-named scholars, Mrs. Hepzibeth Coffin, has passed on from earthly scenes. Thus continually are ending the school days here, to be replaced by the higher, broader lessons, of a better life.

MARY LIZZIE BROWN.  
NEW BEDFORD, Mass., Sept. 27, 1897.





Photo by Patrick O'Neal  
The Mitchell Family, of the Straight Wharf Theatre's Play, "Maria Mitchell," which is closing Sunday evening, August 13. Left to right are Doris Donohue as Phoebe, Sara Katchen as Lydia, Thom Kivlan as William, Barbara Bisco as Anne, Lee Salisbury as Andrew, and Vera Johnson as Maria.

### "Maria Mitchell," First of Island Plays at Straight Wharf.

On Monday evening, July 10th, the Straight Wharf Theatre, at the foot of Main street, will present M. G. Fawcett's authentic Nantucket historical play, "Maria Mitchell". The play, which deals with the life of Maria Mitchell, first American woman astronomer—and Nantucket's most famous daughter—has been most successfully presented in the past Straight Wharf Theatre seasons.

Born and brought up on this picturesque island, Maria in early youth decided that she must follow her own destiny wherever it led her, regardless of the possible consequences to her private life. The decision was easy enough to make, but as time passed she found herself in ever-increasing conflict with the rigid Quaker background which formed so much a part of life in the Nantucket of 1843.

Women in those days were supposed to stay at home and not venture into the larger world of men's affairs. It was against this concept of women's "inferiority" that Maria struggled so hard during the long years of her useful life. Instructed by her father, William, in astronomy, Maria chose that science for her career. When her young friends were nightly occupied with knitting and gossiping, Maria was to be found on the roof of the Pacific Bank building (William Mitchell was cashier in the bank, and the family made its home upstairs) sweeping the heavens with her telescope, and assisting her father to make the observations and calculations which were the greater part of his other job, that of observer

for the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey. A tolerant, kindly man, William Mitchell had a profound respect for clear and independent thought. He was a seeker after cosmic truths, and he successfully guided young Maria toward the same goals which he had so carefully chosen for his own life.

The opening of the first act of the play finds Maria at the head of a conspiracy to move the family piano, which had been condemned to an out-building, into the apartment proper. Nowadays there would be no moral decision attached to such a scheme, the only problem being "will the piano fit in the living room, or won't it?" In 1843, in a Quaker family such as Maria's, things were entirely different. The piano, as were all musical instruments, was considered not only a frivolous contraption, but a devilish device by which the player might be led astray—even to hell, if he (or she) played it enough. Such a plan as Maria's was sufficiently serious to warrant deep consideration by the Quaker Elders. It was her first real defiance of the people about her, people who already thought she was "odd" because she spent so much of her time gazing at the starry heavens. The crisis which arises when the Elders discover the "misplacing" of the piano brings the first act to its climax, for in their haste to bring music into the home, Maria and her sisters completely forget the possible dire effects on their father's position as cashier.

By the time Maria reached her later teens she was thought by the Quakers to be well beyond redemption. She began to make more friends among

the "worldly" people on the island (the "worldly" being those not of the Society of Friends), and gradually made as complete a break as possible with the society into which she had been born. From this obscurity Maria suddenly shot up to world fame and recognition—she discovered an important comet—and the people who had so long disapproved of her just as suddenly realized that a scientific genius was in their midst. Perhaps the comet was Maria's greatest triumph, for in discovering it she proved to the world, and to herself, that a woman could make a great contribution to scientific thought.

Leading players in the cast of "Maria Mitchell" are Vera Johnson, as Maria; Thom Kivlan, as William Mitchell, Maria's understanding father; Sara Katchen, as Lydia, Maria's rather strict mother; and Patrick O'Neal, as John Bolton, vacillating admirer of the play's heroine. M. G. Fawcett is directing the play. The scenery has been designed by Bernard Priest.

## Nantucket Astronomer Tells Rotary of Predecessor's Work

Special to The Standard-Times

NANTUCKET, Feb. 2—Miss Margaret Harwood, astronomer of the Maria Mitchell Observatory on Nantucket, was guest speaker at the weekly Rotary Club luncheon meeting in Legion Hall yesterday.

Miss Harwood spoke briefly on Maria Mitchell, the first woman astronomer in America, who was born in the old homestead on Vestal Street. This building is known as the Memorial House today to thousands of Summer visitors.

Miss Mitchell's parents were Quakers. Her father, William Mitchell, was a teacher and self-taught astronomer. For many years he made calculations for the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. Later in Mr. Mitchell's life this work was shared by his daughter.

Miss Mitchell was her father's assistant in 1831, when observations of the sun were made in connection with those of Paine at Monomoy and Bond at Dorchester, to determine the longitude of the Mitchell house on Vestal Street, where the chronometers of the wharships were rated and set to Greenwich time.

### Named Librarian

Four years later, in 1835, Miss Mitchell opened her school on Trader's Lane. A year later she was appointed librarian of the Nantucket Atheneum. She was the first librarian, holding the position until 1856.

The Mitchell family moved from Vestal Street to the Pacific National Bank on Main Street in 1836, when Mr. Mitchell became cashier of the bank. It was on top of the bank that Miss Mitchell located her first observatory. In 1908, another observatory was built on Vestal Street. It is in this building that Miss Harwood spends most of the clear nights observing the skies.

A year before the Civil War broke out, Miss Mitchell moved to Lynn, where she died in 1865. Shortly before her death she was appointed professor of astronomy at Vassar College and director of its observatory. For many years

she was a member of the college faculty.

In 1893, Miss Mitchell's name was placed on the frieze of the Public Library of the City of Boston, along with other names eminent in art, science, and literature.

### Birthplace Purchased

The Maria Mitchell Memorial Association was founded and the birthplace of Miss Mitchell purchased in 1902. Six years later the present observatory was built and the 7½-inch telescope which belonged to Miss Mitchell was donated to the Association.

Miss Harwood received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Radcliffe College in 1916 after attending the school under a Maria Mitchell fellowship. In 1916 she was appointed fellow for an indefinite term and director of the Nantucket observatory.

Monday nights Miss Harwood is hostess to the Boy Scouts, who learn the forms and histories of the constellations. "Nantucket is an ideal observation platform for the constellations, and especially for the meteor showers," Miss Harwood said.

### Work Helps Scientists

At present much of the observation done here by Miss Harwood helps fellow scientists engaged in upper-atmosphere research.

Membership fee in the Maria Mitchell Association is \$2 annually and Miss Harwood admitted that while thousands of off-islanders have joined during the Summer months, she would like to encourage more of the local children to become interested in the study of the skies. "It's good experience for any youngster who intends to go into scientific or engineering work because it teaches the necessity of accurate measurements," Miss Harwood said.

Rotary President George Jones thanked Miss Harwood for coming to the luncheon and presented her with a gift as a token of the Nantucket Rotary's appreciation and recognition of her devotion to astronomy.



# **Cast Visits Play Locale**



Members of the cast of "Maria Mitchell," an original play of Nantucket's famed astronomer by Margaret Fawcett which concludes its run at Straight Wharf Sunday evening are shown beside the domed telescope at Maria Mitchell Observa-

tory. Left to right are Doris Donohue who appears as Phoebe, Barbara Bisco as Anne, Vera Johnson as Maria, Thom Kivlan as William, father of Maria, and Lee Salisbury as Andrew Mitchell.

Aug 11, 1950



The Mitchell Family, of the Straight Wharf Theatre's Play, "Maria Mitchell," which is closing Sunday evening, August 13. Left to right are Doris Donohue as Phoebe, Sara Katchen as Lydia, Thom Kivlan as William, Barbara Bisco as Anne, Lee Salisbury as Andrew, and Vera Johnson as Maria.

Photo by Patrick O'Neal

1950



## Pupils Enact Episodes Of Astronomer's Life

The fifth grades of the Cyrus Pierce School and the Academy Hill School have presented incidents from the life of Maria Mitchell, the Nantucket Quaker girl who later became a world famous astronomer, in several short plays, given in school assemblies. The plays include *The Scattered Planets*, *Maria's Brother Goes to Sea*, and *Maria's Comet*, all written by Mrs. Margaret G. Fawcett Wilson, instructor in school drama and speech here.

The *Scattered Planets* and *Maria's Brother Goes to Sea*, depicting authentic experiences from Maria Mitchell's childhood, climaxed a four-months course in speech and dramatics, directed by Mrs. Wilson, supervisor of the department at the Cyrus Pierce School. The fifth grade of the elementary school, taught by Miss Nellie Sylvia, presented the two short plays on the stage of the school's assembly hall.

Opening with *The Scattered Planets*, the fifth grade thespians portrayed Maria, at the age of 12, explaining the solar system to her younger brothers and sisters on "First Day" in the garret of the Mitchell's Vestal Street home. Left to their own initiative, the younger brothers and sisters disrupt the Sunday quiet of the sedate Quaker family, bringing their father to the garret with stern words.

Acting in the lead role as Maria was Nancy Ryder and portraying Mr. Mitchell was John Warren. The other Mitchell children were Janet Stafford, Elaine Sylvia, Marcia Soverino, and Lorin Oldrich.

Written especially for the assembly presentation, *Maria's Brother Goes to Sea*, the second featured play, takes place on and around the whaleship *Anne*, tied up at the Straight Wharf in Nantucket in the year 1831. Maria, now 13 years old, comes to the dock at dawn to bid farewell to her brother Andrew, off to sea on his first whaling voyage on their uncle's ship. Because her parents would not approve of her being seen on the docks, Maria is disguised as a boy. As Andrew waits to go aboard, other members of the crew arrive to be signed on by the captain and say goodbye to their families. The play takes a surprise turn when Mr. Mitchell arrives, sending his children scurrying into hiding, and approves his son's going to sea. Just before the ship sails, the captain's wife hurries up the gangplank to make the voyage with him. The scene closes with the crew singing sea chanties as the ship embarks.

Nancy Ryder and John Warren again starred as Maria and her father. Andrew was played by David DuBock; the captain, Lawrence Caldwell; his wife, Jerry Strojny; the first mate, Lawrence Lema; the bo'sun and his family, William Sayle, Mary Folger, and Judy Hamilton; the harpooners and their families, Julian Stanley, Shelby Campbell, Virginia Perry, Diane DeBarros, Nancy Allen

Rosemary Gomes and Donna Mendes; the crew, their sisters and friends, Charles Daniels, Donald Brady, Bill Barrett, Margo Sylvia, Anne Marie Burdick, and Marcia Soverino, substituting for Georgia Garnett who was ill. William Perkins, principal, assembled the set.

The fifth grade of the Academy Hill School, under Mrs. Lester Simmons, teacher in charge, repeated their two short plays, using a different cast, in a second assembly. Playing in the school's production of *The Scattered Planets* were Joanne Glidden as Maria Mitchell; Bruce King as her father; Louise Gibbs, Richard Ray, Brian Legg and Robert Davis as her sister and brothers. The cast for the second performance of the same play included Roberta Waine as Maria; William Grieder as her father; Carol King, Larry Whelden, Richard Stewart, and David Lawrence as her sister and brothers.

The Academy Hill School's second play, *Maria's Comet*, dramatizes the episode when Maria discovered the comet from the small enclosure, built by her father, on top of the Pacific Bank building. Appearing in the first cast were Betsy Clements as Maria; Sybil Talford and Tom McGlinn as her mother and father; Sally Ingram and Billy Yarmy as her sister and brother; Arline Plucinski and Bruce Bartlett as Friends Hannah and Jared Hussey; Sandra Smith as their niece; Roy Anderson as schoolmaster Bolton. In the second cast of *Maria's Comet* were Karen Larsen as Maria; Mary Psaradelis and Bruce Johnston as her mother and father; Betty Hardy and Bob Strout as her sister and brother; Ellen Grant and Joseph Rezendes as Friends Hannah and Jared Hussey; Patricia Moore as their niece; Charles O'Neil as schoolmaster Bolton.

The boys and girls in the cast doubled as stage hands and costume crews. Costumes were provided by Mrs. Wilson.

June 6, 1958

## "The Scattered Planets"



Photo by Bill Haddon

The cast of "The Scattered Planets" as performed by the pupils of Grade V at the Cyrus Peirce School, under the direction of their author-teacher, Mrs. Margaret Fawcett Wilson, included, from left to right, Nancy Ryder, as Maria Mitchell, Marcia Soverino, Lorin Oldrich, Elaine Sylvia, and Janet Stafford.

## "Maria's Brother Goes To Sea"



Photo by Bill Haddon

"Maria's Brother Goes to Sea," written by Mrs. Margaret Fawcett Wilson, was also performed by Grade V at the Cyrus Peirce School by the following pupils: On stage: Lawrence Lema, Laurence Caldwell, Jerry Strojny, Julian Stanley, Donald Brady, Billy Barrett, Charles Daniels, William Sayle, David Du Bock, Shelby Campbell; On Wharf: Donna Mendes, Nancy Allen, Virginia Perry, Rosemary Gomes, Margo Sylvia, Diane De Barros, Judy Hamilton, Mary Folger, Anne Marie Burdick, and Nancy Ryder. The two plays were also given by Grade V at the Academy Hill School.

June 7, 1958



### Tea At Memorial House For Miss Loines

Miss Elma Loines and friends were entertained at a tea by local officers and staff members of the Maria Mitchell Association at the Memorial House on Wednesday afternoon, August 19. Miss Loines has given the Maria Mitchell Observatory her eight-inch Alvan Clark and Son telescope, complete with iron pier, clock and numerous accessories. A few weeks ago, Miss Hoffleit, Director of the Maria Mitchell Observatory, went to Lake George, N. Y., where Miss Loines' father had built his observatory. There a mechanic from Yale University Observatory dismantled the telescope for shipment to Nantucket.

The lens and some of the accessories, including a spectroscope, were displayed Wednesday in the Maria Mitchell Memorial House for the admiration of the visitors. It may be some time before the telescope can be re-assembled here. Space at the Observatory is very limited and neighboring property obstructs much of the sky.

It is hoped in the near future sufficient funds may be raised to erect a new observatory to house this excellent instrument, as well as several smaller telescopes owned by the Maria Mitchell Observatory. The Loines telescope, which is larger than any of the telescopes now in operation at the Observatory, is eventually to be used for public open nights, educational projects and further work on variable stars.

The ladies who poured at the tea on Wednesday were Mrs. Charles Amey, Mrs. George D. Richmond, Miss Helen Gilbert, Mrs. Allen Norcross, Mrs. C. G. Snow, and Mrs. Herbert Johnson. Home made cookies were provided by Mrs. C. G. Snow, Mrs. A. Vincent, and Mrs. Marjorie Weirich.

### 2-Year Director's Appointment Given Dr. Hoffleit

The 57th annual meeting of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association was called to order at three o'clock last Saturday afternoon by President Charles Gerald Snow. The meeting was held in the library of the Association and was attended by about 50 members.

The report of the secretary, Mrs. Louise Young, was read by the acting secretary, Mrs. Andrew Lowell, following which Miss Marjorie Barrett presented her report as treasurer of the organization. Mrs. Charles Amey read the report of the Curator of the Maria Mitchell Memorial House, Miss Marjorie Weirich. The Librarian, Mrs. Allen E. Norcross, read her report, which showed a marked increase in the use of the library and in which Mrs. Norcross mentioned this was the first year members of the Senior Class at Nantucket High School had used the library facilities in the preparation of their English theses.

Mrs. Roger Merrill read the report of the Natural Science Department, prepared by Miss Ethel Hill, following which Dr. Hoffleit presented her second annual report as Director of the Observatory. Outstanding occurrences during the past year which were noted by Miss Hoffleit included the visit of the American Association of Variable Star Observers to the island in June and the events held here in connection with the 50th anniversary of the Observatory, on August 1, the birthday of Maria Mitchell.

Following the presentation of reports, Mr. Snow announced the appointments for the current year, which had been made at the meeting of the Board of Managers on Friday afternoon, April 24. Miss Marjorie Weirich was re-elected Curator of Memorial House, with Miss Frances Weston as her assistant; Mrs. Allen E. Norcross was re-elected Librarian, and Dr. Dorrit Hoffleit was given a two-year appointment as Director of the Observatory.

Mr. Snow said a committee composed of Dr. Lee Jay Whittles, Professor Dirk Brouwer, and Mrs. Roger Merrill had been working for some time to secure a Director of Natural Science, which position had been filled by Miss Ethel Hill as Acting Director since the death of Dr. Betts a year ago.

Mr. Snow announced the appointment of Dr. H. Herbert Johnson as the new Director of the Natural Science Department. A committee composed of Dr. Lee Jay Whittles, Professor Dirk Brouwer, and Mrs. Roger Merrill had been working for some time on the selection of a successor to the late Dr. Betts in the position, which was filled last summer by Miss Ethel Hill as Acting Director.

Dr. Johnson is a resident of Leonia, N. J., and is Professor of Embryology at the City College of New York. In addition to his major subject, which, of necessity, is Biology, Dr. Johnson is interested in ornithology, conchology, and ichthyology, all of which are encompassed in the work of the Maria Mitchell Association's Natural Science Department. He will be assisted in his work here by his wife who is a botanist. The Johnsons have more than a casual interest in Nantucket for their son, Frank, was married here last year to the former Anne Morgan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Stokeley W. Morgan, of Nantucket.

Mr. Snow spoke of the rehabilitation work being carried on at the Hinchman House, where the second floor was redecorated last year. This year the third floor has been made into an apartment, complete with kitchenette.

The report of the nominating committee was presented and the secretary was instructed to cast one ballot for the election of officers for the ensuing year, as voted. The officers elected are Honorary President, Miss Alice M. Howland; Honorary Vice-President, Mrs. Francis W. Davis; President, Charles G. Snow; Vice-President, Richard M. Hinchman; Vice-President, Mrs. Roger Merrill; Vice-President, Edouard A. Stackpole; Secretary, Miss Alma P. Robbins; Treasurer, Miss Marjorie Barrett; Board of Managers (3 years), Dr. Lee Jay Whittles and Professor Dirk Brouwer.

An amendment to the By-Laws of the Association was presented by President Snow. Copies of the proposed amendment had been sent to all members. It was voted unanimously to amend the By-Laws so the annual meeting of the Association will be the third Saturday of July, instead of April, and the Board of Managers will hold their meetings in May and October.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences is planning a meeting in Nantucket this fall, Mr. Snow announced, and he appointed Dr. Hoffleit chairman of the committee in charge of arrangements. The Academy will honor Maria Mitchell with a plaque at the meeting in September.

Miss Margaret Harwood said Miss Helen Wright's popular biography of Maria Mitchell, "Sweeper in the Sky," had sold out its third edition and was in danger of being unobtainable in the near future. Consequently, she was glad to report that Miss Wright, herself, had gone ahead and ordered a fourth edition. Miss Wright is giving the Association the entire edition of 1,200 copies. She was given a rising vote of thanks, to which Mrs. Wright responded graciously.

A new cover, designed by Dr. Whittles, is now available for "A Grain of Mustard Seed," the wild flower book by Mrs. Alice A. Shurrocks and published last year by the Association. The covers are at the Library and may be secured by those who have purchased copies of the little book.

Following a motion made by Dr. Whittles, it was unanimously voted that Miss Margaret Harwood, Director of the Observatory for 45 years, be made an honorary member of the Astronomical Committee.

Aug 29, 1959

May 1, 1959







## The Maria Mitchell Memorial Observatory.

In the lot adjoining the Maria Mitchell homestead on Vestal street now stands a substantial monument, erected to the memory of the woman who was Nantucket's most famous daughter—a fire-proof structure which will doubtless stand for centuries, a fitting testimonial to the noted astronomer, a credit to the members of the association through whose efforts it was built, and a credit to the town which can boast of being the birth-place of Miss Mitchell. As may be seen from the accompanying photograph, the observatory is of simple but attractive model, built by careful designers and contractors who were students of cement and brick construction, and surmounted by a copper dome. It is a memorial which our townspeople and summer visitors will surely appreciate, for it has been erected at a cost of several thousand dollars, and the association is deserving of every bit of assistance and encouragement that can be extended to it.

An early step in the erection of the observatory was securing the 5-inch equatorial telescope which Prof. Mitchell had used when on Nantucket. This was an Alvan Clark instrument presented to her by a number of public spirited women of Massachusetts. Some time after the death of Prof. Mitchell, Dr. Rollins of Boston became the owner of the telescope, and in the spring of 1907 it was presented by him and his wife to the Association, and is now, after being thoroughly renovated and re-mounted, set up in the fire-proof observatory erected for it on the 40-foot lot west of the original Maria Mitchell property.

This lot was donated to the Association in 1906, but the first step towards the construction of the observatory was the founding of the astronomy class in the summer of 1906, which, as was stated by the curator in the 5th annual report, "was the outgrowth of a desire present with some of the members from the foundation of the Association, that the study of astronomy should be introduced as soon as a sufficient number of students interested in the subject could be found." To Miss Cannon of Harvard Observatory, and to Director Pickering, who named her to the Association, is due much of the interest which has made desirable the erection of this observatory, as well as the continued interest of the astronomy class in the subjects which have been brought to its attention.

At the annual meeting held March 28, 1907, a committee was authorized to make an effort to provide a suitable fire-proof observatory for the protection and use of the telescope. Personal letters were written to such as were likely to feel sufficient interest in the undertaking to contribute towards its accomplishment, and about thirty-nine hundred dollars (\$3900) was donated for the specific purpose of providing a home for the telescope, consisting of a five-inch lense, finder, objective, nine eye pieces, sun shade,

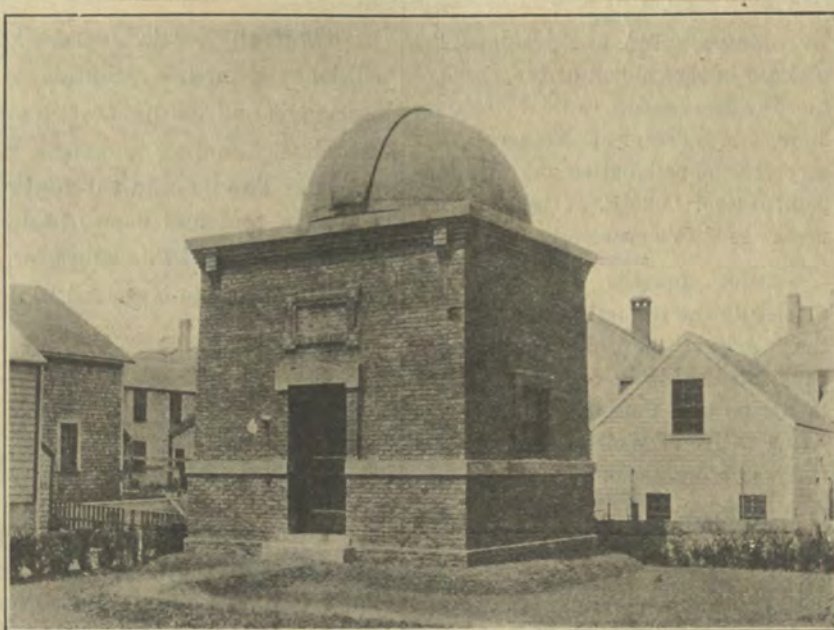
star and sun diagonals, and a micrometer.

Prof. Mary W. Whitney, President of the Association, appointed a building committee with Albert G. Brock as chairman, who after considerable deliberation and thought selected as architect, J. Chandler Fowler, who had been recommended by Charles Neal Barney, Esq., of Lynn, a nephew of Professor Mitchell. Mr. Fowler visited several observatories and made an exhaustive study of such detail as the money at command allowed, and his plans, after having been seen and considered by each of the committee, were accepted. The contract for the fire-proof structure was awarded Angus MacDonald and Company of Boston, on February 29, 1908. The contract for the copper dome was given to Mr. Lowe of Boston, whose long experience in that line of work, including the construction of domes at Columbia, Wellesley and other colleges, commended him to the attention of the committee.

The new building is simple in design and substantial in every detail. The foundation is deeply laid in a bed of concrete. The centre pier, on which the delicate instrument rests, is separate from the floors and walls of the building, so as to avoid any jar and consequent interference with the astronomers' observations. The doors, floors, stairway, partitions and windows are all fire-proof.

The lower room is to be used for an astronomical library and class room and in it will be placed, not only the books of the day required for the classes, but the valuable astronomical library of Professor Mitchell, donated to the association by her brother, Prof. Henry Mitchell, on the day that he learned of the founding of the Memorial.

According to contract, the building was finished by the first day of June of the present year.



[Photo by Boyer]

At the annual meeting of 1908 a small appropriation was made to provide for an astronomer to instruct the class for a few weeks during the summer and to make original observations.

Prof. Whitney and Miss Cannon, chairman of the observatory committee, nominated Miss Ida Whiteside of Whitin observatory, Wellesley, Mass. Miss Whiteside received her astronomical education at Vassar College, and while she cannot give so much time as is wished, the privilege of having so competent an observer prevailed with the committee and she was duly appointed to the position. During her stay she will give one lesson each week to the class. One evening of each week will be devoted free to those interested in looking through the telescope. At other times the observer is expected to have absolute quiet and uninterrupted opportunity for personal study and observations.

At present the appropriation to the "observatory fund" is necessarily small, but it is hoped that in the future, either by a larger endowment, or by fund for the maintenance of the observatory, the services of an expert astronomer may be continued throughout the year.

JUNE 27 1908

## The Maria Mitchell Observatory at Nantucket.

Professor Maria Mitchell, whose discovery of a telescopic comet, together with the calculation of its orbit, gave her world wide reputation among scientists, descended from the Coffins, Starbucks, Macys, Cartwrights and Folgers of Nantucket.

Miss Mitchell's aptitude for scientific pursuits manifested itself quite early in life and she proved herself to be a helpful assistant to her father while yet very young.

Her father, William Mitchell, was a successful teacher in the local schools for some years and later was cashier of the Pacific bank. He was an enthusiastic astronomer and his children were taught to count seconds for him by the chronometer and to regard the study of the heavens as an interesting duty. He was employed to "rate" the chronometers of the whaling fleet and it was in order to get the exact longitude of the Vestal street house for these calculations that at the time of the total eclipse of the sun in 1831 the sash of the parlor window was taken out, and while her father made the observations, twelve-and-a-half-year-old Maria counted the seconds for him. She mentions in her diary, 54 years later, that she has again counted the seconds during another total eclipse of the sun, but this time while a class of eager girls at Vassar College took the observations.

During the twenty years that Miss Mitchell was librarian at the Athenaeum in Nantucket, she had many opportunities to direct the reading of the young people to their advantage, while her leisure moments were largely occupied with her favorite study.

On one of the Memorial windows in the Public Library in Boston, Professor Mitchell's name is found with that of M. Somerville.

The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association was organized in 1902, primarily to purchase and preserve the birth-place of Maria Mitchell—the old house on Vestal street, Nantucket, built in 1790 and owned for 86 years by some member of the Mitchell family.

The Association was chartered in 1903. During the years 1904 to 1906, inclusive, much that was associated with Maria Mitchell was loaned or donated to the Association, and considerable scientific material has been collected.

In the summer of 1906 an enthusiastic and persevering astronomy class was formed. Through the courtesy of one of the staff of Harvard College the class was led to practical observations of many of the constellations, colors of the stars, etc.

The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association is desirous that its collection shall be of practical value to scientists in their study of the island, past and present, and it is hoped before many years they will have in their science room specimens of all plants which grow upon the island, as well as a representative collection of the animal life and of the minerals peculiar to the locality.

The observatory which now stands on the lot adjoining the Maria Mitchell homestead on Vestal street was built in the spring of 1908 and was dedicated on the 15th of June of that year.



# WOMAN ASTRONOMER WON THE HEART OF ALL NANTUCKET

Though an Off-Islander, Margaret Harwood Could Call on Every Native  
For Help During the Eclipse



Miss Margaret Harwood (Left) and Miss Cecilia H. Payne on Roof of Study Adjoining Maria Mitchell Observatory, Nantucket, the Day Before the Eclipse

By LOUIS LYONS

NANTUCKET—It is perhaps fully as important on Nantucket that Margaret Harwood looks as though she were going clamming and talks as though she would respect any information you might have on the chances of getting clams this morning, as that she has capably directed for 12 years the astronomical observatory erected by the Maria Mitchell Memorial Association in honor of Nantucket's great woman astronomer.

In fact, one suspects that merely to have directed the observatory, even though her researches were as distinguished as Maria Mitchell's own, would never have won for this off-islander a niche in Nantucket's local temple.

Nantucket appreciates real folks. It respects real tangible endeavor. Miss Harwood has the knack of handling matters of abstract research in the same objective way that Nantucket goes fishing or "presumes likely" it'll storm. She has a way of propagating interest in astronomy as though she had found a patch of bigger blueberries.

## At Maria Mitchell's Telescope

That is not to say that Nantucket folks have not always been astronomers. Generations of the islanders have lived on familiar terms with the heavenly bodies. They have sailed by the stars and watched by their light at night for ships at sea. Nantucket is a child of the elements. Astronomy is part of the religion of the islanders.

It would have been easy for the professional in astronomy to antagonize such a community of practical amateurs. That was among the perils that

faced the Radcliffe girl and Harvard fellow when she sailed to Nantucket a dozen years ago to take up the telescope that the women of America had presented to Maria Mitchell half a century before. Either her instinct for adjustment was something extraordinary or some friend coached her shrewdly. She might so easily have become a recluse in that tiny dome, living in space with her stars.

You can go into her observatory and talk to her just the way you would talk to the lobsterman. She knows the language and talks it. And perhaps because so much of astronomy is a matter of shrewd but pretty practical and rule-of-thumb observations such as any native fisherman must have accustomed himself to, Nantucket folks have become at home in the toy-size observatory where Margaret Harwood works.

## Very Much at Home

So much at home that on starry Summer nights when there is more than the usual assortment of wonders to be seen in the heavens, she often has to turn away the tail end of the visiting throng who would look through her telescopes.

So much at home that when the path of a total eclipse of the sun passed over Nantucket a week ago for the first time since white men occupied the island, Miss Harwood had the whole island for her staff of special eclipse observers. She manned her observatory deck with recruits from the bank and the High School and the insurance office, and she drew her results from patrolman and fisherman and housewife.

The secret of her method was easy to see. If one could listen to her casual conversations with the neighbors she met on the street in the days before the eclipse. "You're right in a fine place to see how the gulls act. Tell me about it, will you?" she greeted a shore cottager. She might have been asking him to get her some bait. Of course he would and did, and was proud to.

Josiah Barker, 16, timed the eclipse. His brother, Albert, 15, helped manipulate the instruments. After it was

over there was a consultation on times and observations. Josiah and Albert fitted into the laboratory conference as though eclipses were all a part of their regular routine. And Miss Harwood talked as though it was about quahogs or cranberries.

The boys looked and acted quite at ease and as though they belonged. Evidently they were no strangers to the observatory and are used to being taken seriously. They had found no "cornstarch airs" about the stocking-capped young woman who ran the place.

## More Than Honorary Degree

Two other boys who have been at home among the astronomical instruments screened the eclipse on a sheet with an inverted telescope for the crowd on Mill hill, a mile away.

An adult class of women study astronomy regularly with Miss Harwood, and the High School classes are encouraged to go to the observatory as they would to the library. They must often interfere with the detail of scientific work at Maria Mitchell observatory. But one fancies science can make up the loss. Margaret Harwood's job, as she has developed it, has been bigger than scientific routine.

She has focused minds as well as lenses. Her telescopes have penetrated the only boundaries that limit island life. Her pointing has widened the neighborhood to include the immensities beyond the horizon.

Which seems to have been exactly what the Maria Mitchell Memorial Association selected her for, and what it hoped she would do.

If Nantucket were a modern university instead of an old-fashioned neighborhood it would before now have awarded Margaret Harwood an honorary degree in recognition of her services to the community. But it has done something that means more. Miss Harwood has been admitted to permanent fellowship in her island alma mater, a distinction achieved but rarely by one who starts life under the initial handicap of being born an off-islander.

Dec 5 1914



## The Maria Mitchell House—Nantucket

By R. A. Douglas-Lithgow, M.D., LL. D.

Of the illustrious women scientists who distinguished themselves during the nineteenth century, few stand higher than Maria Mitchell, the astronomer, a native of the serene and beautiful island of Nantucket.

This sketch in outline, however, concerns primarily a description of the house in which she was born, instead of biographical details, or an estimate of her life, character and work, beyond the meagre summary compiled from her biography, which forms the conclusion of this paper.\*

\* An interesting biographical notice of Maria Mitchell will be found in the Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Vol. XXV.

Vestal street is situated between Main and Milk street in the southwestern district of the town of Nantucket, and at No. 1 stands the house in which the noted astronomer was born. The house was built by Hezekiah Swain and his brother, in 1790, and subsequently became the property of Simeon Gardner, by whom it was afterwards sold to Aaron Mitchell, on September 17th, 1816.

William Mitchell, the father of Maria, purchased the house from Aaron Mitchell on January 16th, 1818, and on August 1, of that year, Maria Mitchell was born in it.

It is a wooden-framed house covered with wooden shingles externally and, like those generally built about the end of the eighteenth century, is neat and unpretentious in appearance and consists of two stories and an attic. It has a double sloping roof, with one chimney-stack projecting, about midway, from the roof ridge.

There are seven good-sized windows in the facade, four under the eaves in the second story, and three on the ground floor, the front door occupying the space representing the second window in the series above. Above the hall door is a small window with five panes. At each end of the house are four windows communicating respectively with the first, second and third stories—one for each of the upper stories, and two for each end on ground floor.

The house is flush with the street and in front is protected by a neat wooden fence, within which is a well-kept hedge, and there are steps leading up to the door. It is surrounded on three sides by a spacious garden and lawn—the garden being on the right and rear, and the lawn principally on the left side, where the observatory has been erected. The basement and ends of the house are mantled in English ivy.

On entering the front door one passes into a small hall, remarkable as having had the floor painted in imitation of carpet, which is still discernible. Immediately facing the front door there is a passage-way which leads to the living room; on the left of this passage is the staircase; and on the right, as one enters, there is a door leading into the library. The hall also contains a bust of Maria Mitchell. Out of the library a small passage leads into the bedroom in which she was born, and this room also communicates with the living-room. There is an L behind the living-room which contains the kitchen, pantry, scullery and offices, which, for the most part, were added in 1825.

Mounting the stairway to the second story, we traverse a passage communicating with the bedrooms on the left. At the end of the passage, on the right, is a small closet one yard square, and running up to the ceiling. It contains three shelves, and has for one side, one of the windows on the second story. A chair is placed in this closet, which barely allows the closet door to close, and this formed the astronomer's study, wherein she passed many studious hours—the lower shelf being utilized as a kind of desk.

The bedrooms on this story offer nothing of special interest, but the boards constituting the floor are about 22 inches broad.

The attic rooms on the third floor were formerly used by Miss Mitchell and her father for storing diagrams, telescopes, sextants, chronometers, and all the paraphernalia commonly used by astronomers. Amongst these there were numerous balls of hardwood, serving to illustrate the axes, poles, etc., of the different worlds; these varied from 6 inches to a foot in diameter and of these a good story is told: Some of the children of the second generation of Mitchells were once sent up to the attic to play, on a Saturday afternoon, and, resolving to make a sail-boat out of the sundry and manifold collections which they found to their hand, they at length succeeded in carrying out their enterprise to their satisfaction, and when night overtook them they made up their minds to spend a quiet day in the attic next day, which was Sunday. The thoughtful mother of the children provided them with books, and, in order to ensure their being quiet, told them to leave the garret door ajar, she herself leaving the stairway door of the next lower flight wide open into the living-room.\* The children were peaceful for a time, until a draught of air moved one of the diagrams made of canvas (used in the construction of the sailboat) the braid "taken from the Earth's orbit gave way and sent Mars, which had lost the protruding part of its axis, down the garret stairway, striking Jupiter as it went and Saturn flew after Jupiter. The asteroids, little pitchers with great ears, struck by the scene, rushed after the others to see what the hue and cry meant, and the earth brought up the rear.

\* This stairway, which formerly entered the living-room, through what is now a long closet, was removed by Mr. Mitchell. The original staircase was so placed that any thing falling down the attic stairs would naturally descend the stairs leading from the second story, and hence into the living-room.

The garret-door, ajar, was forced widely open, and in some strange way Jupiter received a blow which threw him with tremendous velocity down the next flight of stairs. Bump, bump! Whack, whack! came Saturn tumbling after, whose rings seemed so many shrieking fiddles, while popping and hopping, like toy marbles, flew the little Vesta, Pallas, Juno and Ceres, distractedly aiming everywhere. All finally met at the feet of the father—he taking his Sunday nap!" The sequel may be better imagined than described!"

\* From "The Astronomical Garret," by Anne Mitchell Macy.

Bank, in Main street, where the family afterward resided.

After William Mitchell's departure, the house passed to Peleg Mitchell, subsequently to his widow, and, ultimately it was sold to the "Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association," to whose enterprise and administrative ability all credit is due for the organization of a well-equipped establishment for scientific inquiry and culture in an appropriate and well-garnished home.

The genial curator and librarian of the Association, Mrs. Albertson, is a daughter of Peleg Mitchell, and therefore a cousin of the distinguished astronomer, and while discharging the duties of her appointment much to the satisfaction of the many visitors to the house, she is no less gratified herself to see her illustrious old home used for such a good purpose.

There is an excellent reference library, a Research Fellowship, and General Science Committee, in addition to an Observatory Committee and numerous managerial committees, while the various rooms are devoted to various branches of Natural Science and contain numerous specimens and illustrations connected with each.

In the room set apart for Astronomical Science is the 3-inch Dolland telescope, with which Miss Mitchell, in 1847, discovered the comet which was named for her.

A few words as to the memorial fire-proof observatory standing on the lawn at the left side of the house, built by subscription, at a cost of about \$4,200, and which was dedicated, with interesting exercises, on the afternoon of July 15th, 1908.

It is a square mosque-like building of brick, with a revolving dome on the top, which, by means of appropriate machinery, can be opened at any angle for astronomical purposes. The interior contains a convenient gallery, Miss Mitchell's own scientific library, and the telescope (5-inch lens) which was presented to Miss Mitchell by Miss Peabody in behalf of the women of America, in 1860, with all the requisite accessories. A former small observatory was used by Miss Mitchell previously, in Nantucket, and afterwards in Lynn, and the presentation telescope was also used by her after 1860, when she resided at Lynn.

The following brief abstract of her life, compiled from her biography, may be appropriately introduced here.

But to return. In each of the six finished rooms was an open fire-place, and the six flues were conducted through one chimney.

On the back of the front door is a long latch of mahogany and a pin wedge made from part of the cargo of the wrecked ship "Queen," in 1813.

All the locks, bolts, and hinges in the house are strong and old-fashioned, some of them being made of polished brass, and a late Colonial mantle-piece in the library was erected by Mr. Mitchell.

In this house Maria Mitchell lived with her father and mother until 1837—a period of nineteen years—when Mr. Mitchell, on relinquishing teaching, was appointed cashier of the Pacific

Miss Maria Mitchell was the third child of William and Lydia Mitchell, her mother's maiden name having been Coleman. They were birth-right members of the Society of Friends. Her youth was mainly spent in assisting her mother in the discharge of domestic duties, and in giving her father, a mathematician and astronomer, what help she could in his scientific studies. While still little more than a school-girl she became the librarian of the Nantucket Atheneum, a position which she efficiently held for twenty years. During her spare time she devoted herself to study, and supplemented her income by making calculations for the United States Nautical Almanac—the joint work of her father and herself for a long period of years.

On October 1, 1847, Miss Mitchell discovered, with the aid of the 3-inch Dolland telescope, the comet—nearly vertical above Polaris about 5 degrees—on which her name has been bestowed, and for which King Frederick VI, of Denmark, awarded her a gold medal. She thus became known as an expert in astronomy, and the savants of the world gladly hailed her as one of themselves, while the positions held by her father as one of the Board of Trustees of Harvard College, and a member of Governor Briggs' Council, had already constituted her a persona grata among the highest literary and scientific circles of New England.

In the following year she was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences—an honor which she was the first of her sex to receive.

In 1857, she resigned her appointment as librarian of the Nantucket Atheneum, and visited Europe for the first time. Here her many letters of introduction enabled her to become known and to commend herself to many persons of distinction in science and art, the majority of whom became her warm and steadfast friends.

Mr. Mitchell and his accomplished daughter, a few months after her mother's death, went to live in Lynn, Mass. She brought the original Nantucket observatory with her, also the telescope which had been presented to her by the women of America.

In 1861, she was appointed Professor of Astronomy and Director of the Observatory at Vassar College—received her first degree of LL. D from Hanover, in 1853, and her last from Columbia, in 1887.

In 1888, she resigned her appointment, after 23 years' valuable and much appreciated work, and the trustees unanimously elected her Professor Emerita. They also offered her a home for life in the observatory, an honor which, however, she declined, as, after her long and successful labor, she longed for peace and rest amongst her relatives at Lynn.

In 1889, Miss Mitchell passed peacefully away, at Lynn, full of honors, beloved and respected by all who had known her.



### Reminiscences of a Press Agent.

George F. R. Swain, a man of Nantucket birth, has the following reminiscence article in Clay's Review, a newspaper published in Denver, Colorado. Mr. Swain writes:

"The other evening a man rang my door bell and upon his entrance introduced himself as one who had known me some fifty years ago in Nantucket, Massachusetts. The man and his name had passed from my remembrance and even now I cannot recall him to memory; but the evening's conversation brought back to my mind many things and events of that long-ago period. One thing which impressed me was his reference to one of America's most prominent women—Miss Maria Mitchell—a lady with whom my associations were of the pleasantest, and with whom I can recall many happy hours of childhood. The man told a straightforward story, and, leaving out all quotations, I will tell the conversation as it occurred, as though I, instead of he, were relating it; believing that as the Halley comet and the comet tabulated as 'A-1910' is now attracting much of the public interest, that a few words, at this time, regarding Maria Mitchell may not be void of interest to that same public, who through 'lapse of memory,' have forgotten that the first 'woman astronomist' the world ever knew was an American, and was born upon the Island of Nantucket—that 'little sea-girt isle' of the Atlantic, situated sixty miles from the mainland upon the borders of the 'South Shoals.'

My visitor said to me: 'Maria Mitchell made a man of me. I was a 'beach comber' in the South seas at an age when one is in need of a guiding hand and when the whaler Ocean Rover put in for repairs at the port of Freemantle, S. W. A., I shipped as a foremost hand for a return voyage to Nantucket. Upon my arrival on the Island I was paid off, receiving \$300, as our voyage home had been more than successful and the Ocean Rover had a full cargo of 'right' and 'sperm' whale oil, besides a large amount of whale bone and sperm whale teeth, both of which brought good prices. It was one of the best voyages I ever made financially and the best voyage I ever made in my life, for upon arriving at Nantucket I became acquainted with Maria Mitchell, through whose sympathy and encouragement I became a man and succeeded in life.'

I could readily believe the truth of the man's statement, for, knowing Miss Mitchell as I did, I could vouch for that. It was one of her aims in life to help any young man or young woman, and my visitor is not the only one who has risen to a betterment of conditions through her kindly sympathy and encouragement. So much for preface.

Maria Mitchell was born in Nantucket, Massachusetts, on August 1st, 1818, and was the third child. Mr. William Mitchell, her father, who was a teacher in the Friends' school at that time, was an honest, upright and frugal man, and for his qualities was appointed cashier of the Pacific Bank, which, by the way, was the first bank in the United States that ever took greenbacks at par value in the time of the war of 1861-65.

John Boodle succeeded Mr. Mitchell as school teacher, and from that time until his death, Mr. Mitchell and his daughter devoted their spare time to studying the 'geography of the heavens,' as he used to express it. The National Cyclopaedia, in speaking of Maria Mitchell, says in part: 'Her Quaker parentage, her New England characteristics of faculty and perseverance, were strengthened by her home training and frugality. It was a cheerful home; it was an intelligent home, where topics of the day were fully discussed, and matters of science received special attention.'

From personal knowledge I might say that the above is all true; yet I am willing to wager that the author of the above never lived in the bosom of an austere Quaker family. While it is true that her home was pleasant and her surroundings cheerful for those times, there is not one in one thousand girls of today who could think it a cheerful life. Her young life was spent chiefly in caring for her sisters and brothers, and she was a 'woman before she was a girl.' I do not believe this famous woman ever thought of childhood—her only aim was to be a benefit to her playmates, and all through life she carried out that principle—always helpful to those who needed help.

In 1847, two years after the big fire in Nantucket, she was looking at the stars through the telescope, which was upon her father's roof, when she saw a strange something pass before the lens which she immediately began investigating, and, to her great surprise, found it to be a comet. In her enthusiastic honesty she immediately wrote a letter to Professor Bond of Cambridge, and, owing to delay, Miss Mitchell almost lost her right of discovery. Through the intervention of Edward Everett, however, her right was fully established, and she received the medal from Frederick VI. of Denmark.

Prof. Maria Mitchell, of Vassar College, attained her 67th year on the 21st inst., and the girl students made her a present of a jelly cake of 67 layers. It is not stated whether the girls made the cake, but only girls would have thought to make such a gift.

Miss Mitchell lived to a few months past 71, and all through life was a true woman to womanhood. She was a believer in what in her day was known as 'woman's rights,' and was a firm friend of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Miss Dorothy Dix and other women prominent in the movement; but had no love or patience for the Woodhull-Caflin contingent.

Miss Mitchell was one of America's greatest women. Besides from obtaining from Frederick VI. of Denmark the medal, she was honored by her kinsmen and countrymen. She was elevated to higher spheres than any other woman of her time. She was elected a professor of astronomy of Vassar college in 1865; in 1882 another college conferred upon her the degree of Ph. D., and Hanover in 1882, and Columbia in 1887, honored her with the dignified LL. D. Miss Mitchell was the first woman to be elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, which fact speaks volumes in her favor, for, at that time, 'arrogant man' believed that there was no place for woman outside of the kitchen. Really, she was one among the pioneers of 'the new woman,' the class of today who are not dependent upon the sterner sex for food and pin money.

It can truly be said of Miss Maria Mitchell that the world was benefitted by her living, and that Nantucket was honored the day she was born. What better tribute could be paid to her memory than a monument erected by a contribution taken up from the sons and daughters of that little isle, no matter where they live now, whether in Colorado, Oregon, Montana or elsewhere. Every son and daughter of Nantucket should feel proud to claim the foremost woman of America as a fellow townsman, and should be willing to honor her life work with a befitting monument. I believe that Denver has a few sons and daughters from Nantucket who would not hesitate to give Miss Mitchell her just recognition, and who would contribute to a monument to be erected upon the old site on Vestal street, in Nantucket, Massachusetts, her birthplace."

Oct. 1, 1910

### Miss Mitchell's Portrait.

Visitors to our Atheneum the past week have been exceedingly interested in the portrait of the late Prof. Maria Mitchell, which was hung in position last Monday evening. The portrait, a fine piece of work by E. T. Billings, a well-known artist of Boston, is a wonderfully good likeness. The combination of strength and beauty in the face is very noticeable. The picture was formally presented to the trustees of the library at their last quarterly meeting, by the committee, with a fund of nearly \$500 for books.

The committee are to be congratulated on their success, and it remains for time to form a perspective which will cause Nantucket to glow with ever-increasing pride as the birth-place of this noted astronomer.

Jul 4 18, 1891

Oct. 1, 1910

Oct. 31, 1885



### Dedication of the Maria Mitchell Observatory.

With all the honor and reverence due the memory of a person who won fame and distinction in the world's arena—a woman whose efforts in the interest of science brought honor and credit to her native isle—the new fire-proof observatory recently erected near the birth-place of Maria Mitchell on Vestal street was on Wednesday afternoon dedicated with appropriate exercises in the presence of a large concourse of people gathered on the lawn opposite the homestead. The occasion was marked by more than ordinary interest, for the birth-place of Miss Mitchell is one of the few places in America preserved because the birth-places of women, and the dedication of the observatory as a further testimonial to her memory was an event which will be chronicled not only in the history of Nantucket, but in the world's history as well.

In spite of the showers which fell during the afternoon, the attendance was all that could be desired, many summer residents as well as native Nantucketers gathering upon the invitation of the Maria Mitchell Association in the effort to make the occasion one grand success—which it was. An unique feature of the exercises was the fact that, other than the report made by the chairman of the building committee, the speakers were all women—some of them close friends of Miss Mitchell during her career, who were able to speak from personal acquaintance with the noted astronomer in a manner which left upon the audience a lasting impression of Miss Mitchell's rare womanly qualities and her peculiar sense of humor.

Nantucket has ever been ready to pay homage to her sons and daughters who have become famous, and although Maria Mitchell's life work ended nearly twenty years ago, her memory has been preserved in a substantial form in many ways. The house in which she first saw the light of day nearly ninety years ago has for a number of years been maintained as a museum under the auspices of the Maria Mitchell Association, and now, through the untiring efforts of the officers and members of the association, another lasting monument has been erected to her memory—a memorial which will stand for centuries as a fitting tribute to the famous woman astronomer and a credit to the town which can proudly boast of being her birth-place.

In the absence of the president of the association, Miss Mary W. Whitney, the dedicatory exercises were in charge of Miss Helen Gardner, who, after a few fitting words of greeting, read the following letter from Miss Whitney, who is now in Europe:

"The mounting of Maria Mitchell's telescope in an observatory built near her birth-place, must be an event of interest to all who had the privilege to know her and also to all who care for the science to which she devoted her life. It is a fitting memorial to a remarkable woman, whose scientific acquirement was very superior for the generation in which she lived. Astronomy was not much cultivated, a woman astronomer was quite unknown. Her interest in the science began with her youth and it was never lost sight of in her hopes and aspirations.

It is a pleasing thought that the first person to use the telescope after its mounting is completed, will be a young woman educated at Vassar College and trained in the observatory of Vassar College, where Prof. Mitchell spent her last twenty years of active service. If love and enthusiasm go into the use of the telescope, something will surely be accomplished with it that will be of value. It may not be a great thing; it may not be so striking an event as the discovery of the comet which established Prof. Mitchell's reputation in 1847, but let us hope it will be something worth while, something the ever-growing realm of truth will claim for its own.

I extend my congratulations on the occasion of the successful opening of the observatory.

Mary W. Whitney."

Miss Whitney's letter was received with considerable enthusiasm, general regret being expressed that she could not be present on this occasion. Miss Gardner then read the following sonnet written in memory of Miss Mitchell:

'Twas here, O watcher of the evening sky,  
While distant echoes over moor and sea  
In undertone of rhythm came to thee.  
And ever with yon starlit, gleaming eye,  
The heavens beckoned thee as night drew nigh.  
Here, while thou traced the silent mystery,  
On azure scroll thy soul's intensity  
Did wisdom find and hear her prophesy.  
Thy spirit knew no bounds, for unto thee  
This message was revealed:—that when one star  
Is quenched on high, for ages does its light  
Shine on; so now o'er path of memory  
Thy gracious radiance, steadfast and afar,  
Will lead us ever on to noblest height.  
Anon.

Miss Gertrude M. King read a paper written by Alexander Starbuck of Waltham, a person who was privileged to know the noted astronomer during his boyhood days, and who was consequently able to write of her from the impressions which he has retained in his memory since the time when she called him one of "her boys" a half century ago. Mr. Starbuck's letter read as follows:

"My personal and definite recollections of Miss Mitchell run back as nearly as I can determine to about the year 1854. I can recall the little telescope that was located on top of the bank building, then used, as now, for a banking house and a dwelling—the latter the home of her father, her mother, her sister and herself. I remember being invited one beautiful, moonlight evening to look at the moon through that telescope, and the peculiar sensation it gave me to see that orb apparently so much reduced in size but with a clearly defined roundness, and resembling to my boyish eyes to so marked a degree a peeled orange.

Miss Mitchell's father at that time was cashier of the Pacific Bank and also conducted the meteorological observations on Nantucket for the United States government. Those observations included the temperature, state of the barometer, condition of the atmosphere, nature and direction of motion of the clouds, amount of rainfall and direction of the wind, taken at three definite hours in the day. Miss Mitchell was librarian at the Atheneum library and astronomically was engaged in her own observations and in making calculations for the Nautical Almanac.

By some means, that from my present standpoint seem to me a little mysterious, I had acquired quite a local reputation of being skillful and accurate with my pen, and much of my time, aside from my school work and duties, was employed in copying the work, of both Miss Mitchell and her father, for transmission to the authorities at Washington. As the copies and originals had to be carefully compared before being sent, I was naturally often in Miss Mitchell's company.

Several months before she resigned her position as librarian of the Atheneum library I was employed by her as her assistant, following, if my recollection is right, William Breed Drake. (Of this latter point, however, I am by no means certain). Here again I came into contact with her in another direction. She was a good disciplinarian, yet, withal, a kindly one. She was ever ready to give good advice when advice was sought, and her naturally literary tendencies joined with the duties of her position to make her familiar with all the library under her charge.

I do not know in what year the suggestion of card cataloging of books originated in this country, but I do know that so long ago as 1855 or 1856, under her direction, I worked on a card catalog of the books of the Nantucket Atheneum, which had been begun some time before my employment by her. On each card was a copy of the entire title page of a book. I think some of those cards are still preserved among the archives of the Atheneum. They show not only that she was progressive and awake to the trend of modern thought in library work, but that the Atheneum library, under her direction, was among the first in the country to recognize the advantages of this system now so universally used.

I recall, too, in a general way, with considerable distinctness, the new observatory built for Miss Mitchell and which was a somewhat mysterious affair to us lads. We viewed it with a similarly curious awe to that with which the impressible "ropane gaze on the Mormon Temple at Salt Lake city, which they may look on from the outside only. It stood on the north side of the vacant lot back of the Coffin school-house, and was reached by use of the private way nearly opposite the Alexander Macy house on Liberty street and east of the Benjamin Gardner residence. This I believe was the first properly equipped observatory that Miss Mitchell owned, and as I recall the date it must have been erected in 1858 or 1859.

In July, 1859, like other Nantucket boys who were ambitious beyond the facilities that our island town afforded, I had to leave my old home and find employment abroad. It was with exceeding pleasure that I received in the following month from Miss Mitchell and her father two letters of recommendation entirely unsolicited and unexpected, that were complimentary to me perhaps beyond my deserts. They are before me as I write; and at the risk of being accredited with egotism, I will quote a little from that of Miss Mitchell, for it shows better than anything else can, that her interest in those she called her "boys" extended beyond the days when they were under her control and into their future life, beyond the control of her presence, but not beyond the spirit of her influence.

Commencing she says, 'I meant to write something before you left us, to show to you and to others my high appreciation of your character, but I put it off from day to day and you left before it was done. My Atheneum boys have turned out wonderfully well—they were good boys at the outset, or I should not have employed them,

and I hope they learned no evil from me. Some information they could not help getting from the handling of good books.' The especially complimentary parts of her letter to me I omit, because they may not possess for the average auditor the delightful exhilaration they had for me, a feeling that even the lapse of nearly half a century has by no means eradicated, but the concluding sentence is so characteristic of the tender and womanly-side of her nature and shows so well her thoughtful care over the young lads who once had been in her employ, that I cannot forbear quoting it. She ends her letter thus: 'I should be glad to have you write to me when you can find time and tell me what you are doing and what friends you are making.' Yours very truly,

Maria Mitchell.

Such was Miss Mitchell as I knew her, and I am exceedingly glad to have the opportunity on this occasion to testify of my very high regard for her as a true-hearted woman."

It was fitting that to Miss Florence M. Bennett should be accorded the privilege of speaking upon Miss Mitchell's life-work, for, as Miss Gardner said in presenting her, Miss Bennett is a young woman who has also won honor for herself and Nantucket in Vassar College—one who has not had the honors "thrust" upon her, but who had them "paid" her for well-earned and well-merited work in the field of science. Miss Bennett's address was very entertaining and at the close she received an enthusiastic ovation. Her paper follows:

"In February, 1831, at the age of twelve and a half years, Maria Mitchell performed an early service to the science in which she later signally distinguished herself. As her father's assistant she noted the time of the annular eclipse of that year. Mr. Mitchell's object in observing this eclipse was to determine the longitude of his Vestal street house, that he might set to accurate Greenwich time the chronometers of the whalemens. Four years later, acquiring prestige as one of the first discoverers of Halley's comet on its return, in 1835, Mr. Mitchell was able to raise his place of observation to the rank of an observatory. Today's event, in denoting this Vestal street house an astronomical observatory, merely restores its honors.

The observatory then dates from 1835. The telescope therein mounted belongs to a later year. Shortly after Miss Mitchell's return from her first European tour in 1858 she received, through Miss Eliazbeth Peabody, in behalf of the women of America, this telescope, a fine equatorial instrument made by Alvan Clarke. At that time Maria Mitchell had established for herself a commanding position in the scientific world. By her father she had been early trained to an astronomer's duties.



Because of her own consuming interest in things of the mind, in response to the pressure of the speculative and imaginative instinct within her, she had quietly, steadily, indefatigably, without hope of reward, pursued her studies, until in 1847 she won fame by discovering her comet. When it was settled in the great European realm of science that a young woman on a little island in the Atlantic was to be honored, as the discoverer of a telescopic comet, with the gift of a gold medal at the hands of the king of Denmark, when, moreover, it was found that this same young woman had not stumbled upon the discovery by happy chance, but that she was versed in the niceties and difficulties of her art, that she could compute the orbits of celestial objects, and could make predictions based on exact mathematics—then Maria Mitchell became an accredited astronomer.

In 1848 she was elected unanimously to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1849 she was recommended by the Regents of the Smithsonian Institute as a worthy recipient of a premium from that Institute. The premium was promptly awarded. In the same year she was appointed one of the computers of the Nautical Almanac. Her duties in connection with this publication she performed for nineteen years. Her year in Europe, 1857-8, to which reference has already been made, was filled to the brim with honors. Everywhere she was received with the special courtesies and privileges accorded to a distinguished guest.

This telescope then signifies the esteem in which the women of America held a remarkable woman. That is to be remembered. Nor can we justly lose sight of the fact that Miss Mitchell was cordially in sympathy with what was known as the "Woman's Movement." She was a conspicuous woman among noble women. But her dignity as a scientist was hers irrespective of sex. She worked in fields where men worked. She was rewarded, not because she was a remarkable woman, but because she was a remarkable astronomer among the Americans of her day and generation. Her name is the unique woman's name on the rolls of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. What indeed, however, could be more fitting than that the women of America should put into the hands of this able woman an instrument to be used for further research?

It is also fitting that Miss Mitchell should, at the opening of Vassar College, have taken her place as one of its professors. It was the pioneer woman's college. Hear the words of its founder in 1861:—"It occurred to me that woman, having received from her creator the same intellectual constitution as man, has the same right as man to intellectual culture and development. It is my hope to be the instrument in the hand of Providence of founding an institution which shall accomplish for young women what our colleges are accomplishing for young men."

In the year 1865 Miss Mitchell was appointed Professor of Astronomy and Director of the Observatory at Vassar College. She abandoned a student's life for a teacher's. It is the sacrifice on which our educational system is built. It is the sacrifice which our

country still demands. Professor Mary W. Whitney, her associate at Vassar College, and the present occupant of the chair which Miss Mitchell held, speaks thus—"It is possible that, had she determined to remain only an observer, she might have contributed more to the stock of astronomical knowledge, since the daily routine of class preparation and class work must essentially curtail the night work of an astronomer. But I must believe that her choice was the wise one, and that what Vassar college has gained, and all the young women have gained who have come under her influence, must far outweigh the possible increase in astronomical fact that might have followed from these twenty-three years, if devoted exclusively to the work of the telescope."

It is a matter which can never be estimated and set down even approximately in figures how much Miss Mitchell's counsel and influence meant at Vassar College in those early days, when the standard of scholarship had to be struck—not merely kept pure, as today. Heart and soul she worked, bringing to her task the mind of a devoted scholar, a thorough worker, a lofty idealist.

Today Miss Ida Whiteside, a Vassar girl of a later generation, takes up her work in this observatory, which stands beside the house where Miss Mitchell was born. This Maria Mitchell Association is a memorial. Work carried on in memory of a worker is more enduring than marble and bronze. It was in this old house that Miss Mitchell dreamed her first imaginings of a scholar's success. It was this house which her father's efforts made an observatory. In this new observatory building even now the stimulus of her personality mounts her telescope for work. Have we not reason to hope for good things? Her bidding would be to lay aside pride in her—pride as Nantucketers, because she was Nantucket, born and nurtured; pride as Vassar women, because she gave the last twenty-three years of her life to the growth of that institution; pride as Americans, because she was of our country; pride as men and women, because she used wisely God's great gift of mind. Her bidding would be: "Do. And don't talk about it."

Mrs. Caroline Earle White was able to speak upon the valuable work which Miss Mitchell accomplished in the realms of science, and her address, although entirely informal, was one of the best of the afternoon.

Miss Elizabeth R. Coffin, as a student at Vassar under Miss Mitchell, was prepared to relate many anecdotes of her acquaintance with the astronomer as a young college girl, which showed the love and esteem in which she was held by all who came in contact with her. "She was our Mother Confessor in those days," said Miss Coffin, "and when I was out with myself I always went to Miss Mitchell and had it out with her." Miss Coffin's address showed the humorous side of Maria Mitchell's nature in both her college and her private life

Albert G. Brock, as chairman of the building committee, then made a concise report regarding the erection of the memorial, and in his official capacity presented the keys of the new building to the association, which were accepted by Mrs. Maria T. Swain in behalf of the astronomy committee, with a few brief remarks.

The exercises closed with the singing of the "Maria Mitchell Song," written by Miss Ella Gardner, to the tune of "John Brown's Body," a choir composed of eight young misses leading the music. The song reads:

We're singing for the glory of Maria Mitchell's name,  
She lived at Vassar College and you all do know the same.  
She once did spy a comet and she thus was known to fame,  
Good woman that she was.  
Glory, glory, hallelujah! Glory, glory, hallelujah!  
Glory, glory, hallelujah! Good woman that she was.  
She leads us through the mazes of hard astronomy,  
She teaches us Newton and the laws of Kepler three,  
Th' inclination of their orbits and their eccentricity.  
Good woman that she be.  
Tho' as strong as the Rocky Mountains, she is gentle as a lamb,  
And in her ways and manners she is peaceable and calm.  
And our mental perturbations she sootheth like a balm,  
Good woman that she am.  
Sing her praises, sing her praises, good woman that she were,  
For the Pope says 'tis human, she is hardly known to err,  
And from the path of virtue she never strayed fur,  
Good woman that she were.

Tea was served by the ladies at the close of the dedication, and all who desired were privileged to inspect the memorial building, Miss Ida Whiteside, the new instructor in astronomy, receiving the visitors.

### Written by Maria Mitchell.

The following poem was written by Maria Mitchell in 1844 and published with a collection of other poems in a little booklet entitled "Seaweeds From the Shores of Nantucket":

#### AN OLD STORY.

Before Columbus ever thought  
Of Western World with glory fraught;  
Before the Northmen had been known  
To wander from their native zone;  
Before was raised a single mound,  
The antiquarians to confound;  
Indeed, so very long ago—  
The time one can't exactly know—  
A giant Sachem, good as great,  
Reigned in and over our Bay State.  
So huge was he, his realm so small,  
He could not exercise at all,  
Except by taking to the sea  
(For which he had a ticket free,  
Granted by Neptune, with the seal,  
A salient clam, and couchant eel).  
His pipe was many a mile in length,  
His lungs proportionable in strength;  
And his rich moccasins—with the pair  
The seven-league boots would not compare.  
Whene'er siestas he would take,  
Cape Cod must help his couch to make;  
And, being lowly, it was meet  
He should prefer it for his feet.  
Well, one day, after quite a doze,  
A month or two in length suppose,  
He waked, and, as he'd often done,  
Strolled forth to see the mid-day sun;  
But while unconsciously he slept,  
The sand within his moccasins crept;  
At every step some pain he'd feel,  
'Twas now the toe, now near the heel;  
At length his Sachemship grew cross,  
The pebbles to the sea he'd toss;  
And with a moccasin in each hand,  
He threw on either side the sand;  
Then, in an instant there appear  
Two little isles the Sachem near;  
One as the Vineyard now is known,  
The other we may call our own.  
At ease, he freely breathed awhile,  
Which sent the fogs to bless our isle;  
And turning east, with quickened motion,  
The chill, bleak winds came o'er the ocean.  
Ill-judging Sachem! would that you  
Had never shaken here that shoe;  
Or, having done so, would again,  
And join Nantucket to the main!

## The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association.

Founded 1902.

Chartered July 18, 1903

The following articles, which are on sale at the Memorial during the summer, may be ordered through the curator, at any time, and will be sent, postage prepaid, on receipt of price:

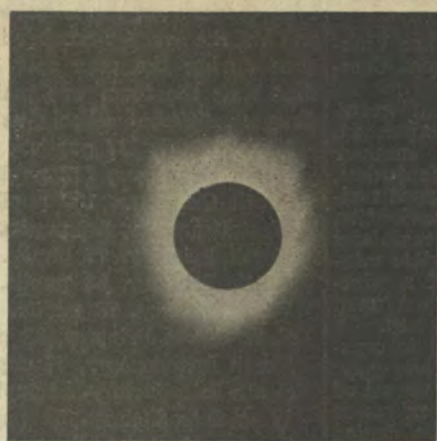
- Photographs of Maria Mitchell (cabinet size), 50 cts.
- Photogravure of Maria Mitchell, 25 cts.
- Photogravure of the house, 5 cts.
- Facsimile of time of eclipse of 1831, "M. M.'s handwriting, 5 cts.
- Facsimile of gold medal awarded Prof. Mitchell by the King of Denmark in 1847, 5 cts.
- Engraving of house, with facts and dates relating to the house and to Prof. Mitchell, 5 cts.
- Photograph of house (unmounted), 35 cts.
- Photograph of library unmounted (two views), each 35 cts.
- Photograph of General Science Room (two views) each 35 cts.
- Photograph of Astronomy Room (two views), each 35 cts.
- Post cards, one exterior, four interior views, package 10 cts.
- An Astronomical Garret, by Anne Mitchell Macy, 5 cts.
- Pleistocene Deposits of Sankoty Head and Their Fossils, by Joseph A. Cushman (Chairman of Sankoty Head Committee). Publications of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association, Vol. I, No. 1, 25 cts.
- Photograph of letter from "Hon. Edward Everett to Hon. William Mitchell," announcing the award of a Gold Medal by the King of Denmark to Maria Mitchell for the discovery of a Telescopic Comet (from original in possession of Vassar College Observatory) \$1.00
- Winter address of MRS. M. A. ALBERTSON, 3940 Brown street, Philadelphia

July 18, 1908

1906



SEPTEMBER 10, 1932



Top Left—The stone tower at North Truro, from which the party from the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Observatory made their eclipse observations.

Lower Left—"Totality" and the corona.

Top Centre—Albert G. Brock making an observation through one of the telescopes at the base of the tower.

Top Right—Miss Harwood and Mr. Brock in conference over a tricky stop watch.

Centre—A view of Highland Light—the most powerful flashing light on the Atlantic coast.

Lower Right—Miss Harwood watching for "first contact", near the base of the stone tower. Highland Light in the distance.



Prof. Maria Mitchell, of Vassar College, sends us the following extract from *Nature*:

"Now that the identity of the great comet of the present year (seen in South America) with that which excited such unusual interest in almost all parts of the globe in March, 1843, is pretty well established, it is not without interest to recall the circumstances under which the comet made its appearance in 1843.

The first definite observation of the head of this comet, and the only one previous to Perihelion passage, was claimed to have been made by Capt. Ray, and is described in a letter from Mr. Mitchell, of Nantucket, to Prof. Pierce, the well-known American geometer. Capt. Ray is said to have been 'a man of sound judgment, a very accurate observer, and a correct man. He says he saw the comet at Conception, S. A., at 11, A. M., Feb. 27, 1843; the comet's distance from the sun was only 1-6 of the sun's diameter."

This comet was seen in southern latitudes when it returned this year. It passed its perihelion January 27.

May 6, 1884

#### Valuable Work of the Nantucket Association.

Mrs. Wilhelmina Paton Fleming, whose death in Boston was recorded recently, was one of the foremost astronomers of the world, her discoveries of new stars and meteors, by means of the astronomical photographs at Harvard University, having attracted the attention of the scientific world.

She was appointed assistant at the Harvard College Observatory in 1879 and curator of the astronomical photographs and records in 1890 with a corps of a dozen women as assistants.

Mrs. Fleming was one of the few women astronomers in New England whose researches entitled her to the consideration of the committee of award of the \$25,000 astronomical fellowship which has recently been announced by the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association. The fellowship entitles the holder to an income of \$1,000 a year, with six months at the observatory on Nantucket Island, a full semester at one of the larger observatories of the country, and a quadrennial year at a research observatory in Europe.

Any woman astronomer in America is eligible for the fellowship, which has not yet been awarded. The movement, which has resulted in a great opening of opportunity for women astronomers throughout the country, had its inception on the island of Nantucket. In memory of Maria Mitchell, America's first woman astronomer of note, who for many years had her observatory on the island, and did her work there, the association bearing her name was formed.

The original purpose of this organization was the preservation of Miss Mitchell's home, but the appeal of the association was so successful that not only was the house purchased, but a fireproof observatory was built, a new telescope installed, and the present fellowship finally established.

It is believed by leading astronomers that some of the most valuable work yet done by women astronomers will result from the enterprise of the little Nantucket association.—New Bedford Mercury.

#### Spoke on the Origin and Growth of Maria Mitchell Association.

The evolution of the Science Departments of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association was the subject of a talk Monday afternoon in the Hinchman House, by Mrs. Alfred F. Shurrocks. The Association was founded in 1902 and incorporated in 1903, and that summer the Memorial House was opened to the public. Mrs. Benjamin Albertson, the mother of Mrs. Shurrocks, after visiting the House, said: "It is dead. I am going to do something."

What she did was to ground the living memorial to Maria Mitchell on the "continuance of Maria Mitchell's known interests and activities". Her watchword to young people: "Do something"; her conviction: that astronomy and natural science as subjects yield large returns, that Nantucket area offers varied resources for study in these fields."

In 1904, and from then on for many years, under Mrs. Albertson's hands, simple home furnishings gave background to exhibits of some of Maria Mitchell's scientific instruments, to collections of Nantucket shells, butterflies, minerals, mounted and fresh wild flowers. Talks were given by eminent scientists—astronomers, zoologists and botanists—in the (former) kitchen. All visitors, especially Nantucket young people, were encouraged to "come in, study something". To aid in the work, about 6 or 8 reference books were bought in 1904. At a conservative estimate, the Library now numbers about 2500 volumes.

The General Science was divided into Astronomical and Natural Science Departments in 1908, when the Observatory was dedicated and Maria Mitchell's telescope was set up.

Such were the beginnings of the Astronomical and Natural Science Departments. Work along these lines is still developing and expanding.

Alice Albertson Shurrocks, formerly Curator and Director of Natural Science.

Aug. 28, 1948

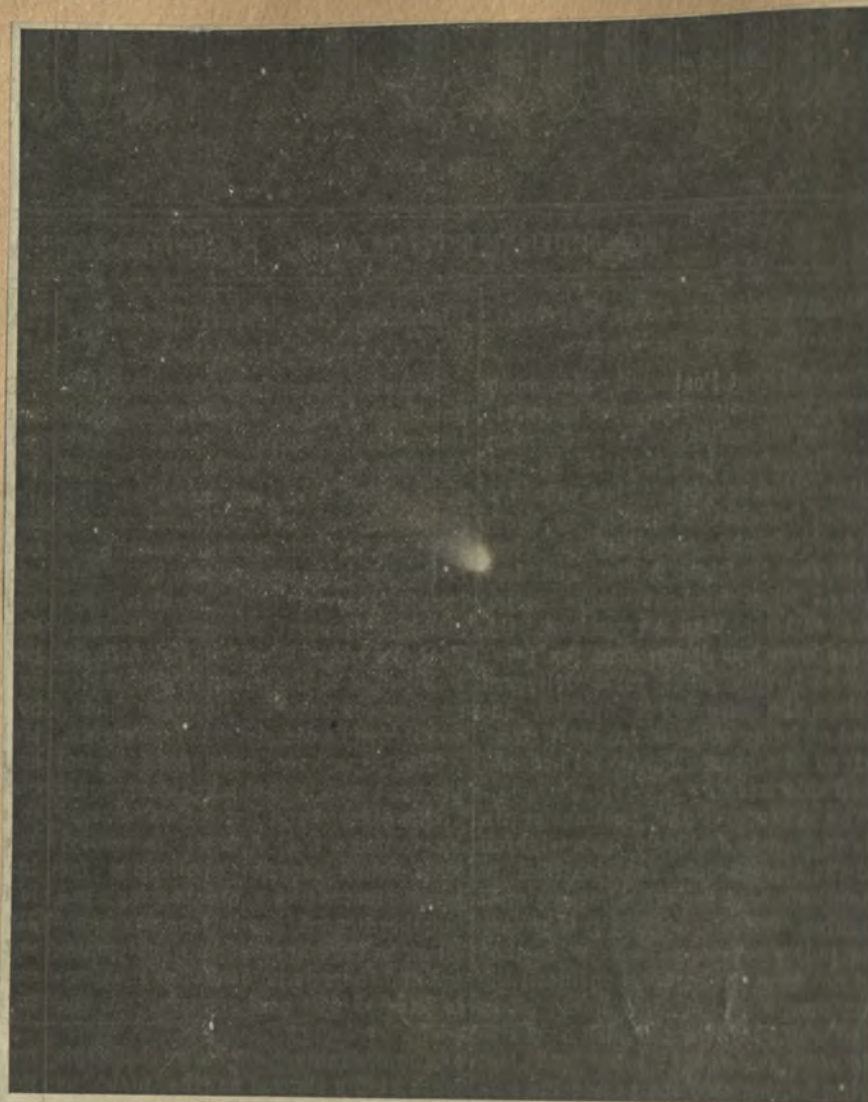
Editor of The Inquirer and Mirror:

May I through the columns of your paper answer the question which has come to me from Nantucket—"Whether Mr. Carnegie has given \$10,000 to the Maria Mitchell Fund?" Not yet given, but he has promised "to give the last ten thousand dollars for the Research Fellowship Endowment of \$25,000 when the rest has been paid in." To receive the \$10,000 we must have collected \$15,000. About \$1,500 (fifteen hundred) of this remains to be paid in. When that amount has been received, then Mr. Carnegie will make the sum up to \$25,000.

Respectfully,

Mary A. Albertson.  
Librarian and Curator of the N. M. M. Association.

Jan 1, 1911



"Delavan's Comet," from a Photograph Taken by Miss Harwood at the Maria Mitchell Observatory on Vestal Street.

Delavan's Comet may now be seen for a little while in the evening, as soon as it is dark, in the constellation of the Great Bear under the bowl of the Big Dipper. It was discovered on December 17, 1913, by Paul T. Delavan, astronomer at the La Plata Observatory in the Argentine Republic. At that time it was a faint, round object barely visible in a telescope the size of the Maria Mitchell telescope. Since then it has been coming nearer to the sun and has been growing steadily brighter. Friday, October 2, it is at its nearest point to the sun, but that is 147,000,000 miles away.

This is the turning point, and from

now on the comet will move farther away; it will gradually lose its feathery tail and will diminish in brightness. It is moving toward the west, so that after October 10, when the moonlight will not be so disturbing, it will be seen more easily in the early evening between the handle of the Big Dipper and the horizon.

This picture was taken with the photographic telescope of the Maria Mitchell Observatory on the morning of September 16 and was enlarged by Boyer. The tiny white dots scattered about the comet are stars. It is interesting to observe that stars can be seen through the tail, which shows how thin the substance is which forms the comet.

OCTOBER 3, 1914

July 22, 1911



# Island Woman's Research Carries on Mitchell Tradition

Special to The Standard-Times

NANTUCKET, Aug. 4 — When most of Nantucket is enclosed in darkness, a light may still be seen in the observatory on Vestal Street.

There, through the early hours of the morning, Miss Margaret Harwood carries on astronomical research maintaining the tradition established by a predecessor, Maria Mitchell.

Time has done little to dull the enthusiasm and liveliness of Miss Harwood, who first began her studies in Nantucket in 1912 when she received a \$1,000 fellowship from the Maria Mitchell Association.

A walk through the observatory reveals a large room downstairs filled with charts, cabinets and photographs. Going up a narrow metal staircase to the dome, the visitor can see the two telescopes—the one given to Maria Mitchell in 1859 by the women of America and a modern photographic telescope.

## Man's Idea

Miss Harwood confided the idea of giving Maria Mitchell the 1859 telescope was proposed by a man. However, the man preferred to remain anonymous because he knew that Miss Mitchell would appreciate the gift more if it came from members of her own sex.

Miss Harwood uses both telescopes to do her work on stars which vary in brightness in "a particularly dense part of the Milky Way called the Scutum Sobieski, which means—Shield of Sobieski," she explained.

The base for the modern telescope has a foundation which goes 7 feet into the sand so there won't be any vibrations.

A chat with Miss Harwood in her home, naturally led to the name of Maria Mitchell. Sitting in the straight chair of her living room, furnished in the simple Quaker style, she said of Maria: "She was a great reader, thinker and a remarkable teacher."

"The Mitchells were originally ship owners. William Mitchell's father lost his whaling ships in the War of 1812 when the British were trying to get into Nantucket Sound. He had planned to go to Harvard College but war intervened. He farmed, made barrels for whale oil, taught school and finally in 1837 became cashier of the Pacific Bank of Nantucket."

Although Mr. Mitchell never attended Harvard, he later was recognized by this institution for his achievements in mathematics and science. He received honorary degrees in mathematics and science from Harvard and Brown Universities and became an overseer of Harvard. It was in his third child, Maria (one of 10 children) that he found a kindred mind to share his great in-



—Bill Hadden Photo

MISS MARGARET HARWOOD

tellectual curiosity. Self-taught except by her father and the Rev. Cyrus Pierce, Maria utilized her own mental resources to the utmost.

## Seen Today

The small square study, barely large enough for some shelves and a chair, where Maria Mitchell began her education, can be seen today in the house on Vestal Street. The utter simplicity of this room is in keeping with the style of the entire house.

A guided tour with the curator, Miss Marjorie Weirich, reveals a variety of plain Quaker furnishings. The only pieces not of that sect and era are Maria's first telescope which stands in the hallway, the desk she used at Vassar and the tall grandfather clock in the living room.

The house was empty when the association bought it, Miss Weirich explained, but one by one, pieces of furniture, which were there originally, were bequeathed back to the Mitchell families. Today the visitor can see such relics of the early 19th Century as the old leather fire buckets on the staircase, Mrs. Mitchell's sam-

pler and a broad-rimmed Quaker hat hanging on a hook in the hall.

Miss Weirich, a former school teacher, explains the significance of each article with spirited pride. She says of her position, "It's teaching without examination—and teaching is the tradition of this house."

Maria herself carried on this tradition when she started a school for Young Ladies on Trader's Lane in 1835. She never had the opportunity to go to college, herself, for a very good reason—there were no women's colleges at that time. But the academic world soon encompassed her when she became the first professor of astronomy at Vassar when it opened in 1865.

Miss Harwood relates the story of Maria Mitchell's comet with much pride. Maria's discovery of this telescopic comet was most unusual, Miss Harwood explained, because comets are "seen in Europe first because evening arrives there five hours before it does in America. A comet is not

usually visible until it comes near the sun," she said.

It was a clear October evening in 1847 when Maria made her discovery. She was using her telescope set up on the roof of the Pacific Bank building located then and today on Main Street. Her family lived in the bank building. Her father reported her discovery to the Harvard Observatory and Maria worked out the path of the comet.

It happened that in these years the King of Denmark gave a gold medal to the first discoverer of a comet which could be seen only through a telescope. The community pride of Nantucket was equaled by the pride of women everywhere who realized that for the first time a woman had established her place in the field of science.

Through this discovery Maria Mitchell made her scientific debut from there she went on to become the first woman astronomer in the United States and one of the leading astronomers of the world. Professor Mitchell's recognitions include honorary degrees from Rutgers Female College in 1870, Columbia College in 1887 and election to the New York University Hall of Fame in 1922.

Perhaps the highest tribute to Maria Mitchell is the Association where he work is still carried on. Founded in 1902 by her cousins and former students at Vassar, it includes her birthplace, a library, a natural science museum, the Lydia S. Hinchman House, the Observatory and Miss Harwood's home.

Classes for children are held in the Hinchman House and the library is open to the public for reading and research. Wandering through the stacks one may encounter a title such as "The Herbal or General Historie of Plantes," imprinted at London by John Norton in 1597.

## Open to Public

Miss Harwood opens the Observatory to the public every Monday night during the Summer. In the Fall and Winter the Observatory is open by appointment and special attention is paid to the children of Nantucket.

Miss Harwood presents a lecture on Monday evenings to the public and later takes the visitors up to the dome where they may view the sky in a new perspective. There, the manifold fascinations of the heavens which attracted Maria Mitchell are now revealed under the inspired guidance of her scientific heir, Miss Harwood.

Helping Miss Harwood are Nantucket boys, including Terry Laundry, John Murray, Jim Hanner, Roy Murley and John Stackpole.

Harwood, earned a master's degree from University of California, served as a director of International Astronomical Union, and attended many scientific meetings abroad.

The point is that she has made her name in her field. She has done something more, which she would be first to say was important.

She has made a contribution to her island through her wise development of the educational opportunities offered by Maria Mitchell Observatory. She has contributed to island welfare by school committee service and as a Cottage Hospital trustee.

Perhaps the opportunity which Margaret Harwood discovered 45 years ago was unique. She helped make it so. To those who want it enough, and who equip themselves for it and stick to it, there can be satisfying rewards in the small towns.

## Margaret Harwood to Resign After 45 Years' Service.

On June 1, 1957, after 45 years of devoted service, Margaret Harwood retires as Director of the Maria Mitchell Observatory of Nantucket. In 1912 she was appointed the first Astronomical Fellow of the Maria Mitchell Association. She held this appointment for four years and, in 1916, was appointed Director of the Observatory.

For 45 years Margaret Harwood has worked for the good of the Maria Mitchell Association, the Observatory, and the town of Nantucket, as well as for the wider world of astronomy. Through all these years she has welcomed thousands of visitors and lectured to them on the regular Monday Open Nights in summer. In the winter she has shown hundreds of school children "the wonders of the universe" through the telescope. As these children have grown she has taught them navigation; they have become her assistants in the observatory; in many cases she has helped them get scholarship aid, so they could go "off-island" to college. She has further expressed her interest in education by her work as an active and forceful member of the Nantucket School Committee.

At the same time she has carried on her own astronomical research. She has personally taken well over a thousand plates of the sky, particularly of her favorite region, the Scutum Cloud, in which she has made a long and painstaking study of the variable stars it contains. She has helped to train women in astronomy through her work with college students during the summers. She has welcomed astronomers from all parts of the world to her hospitable cottage beside the Observatory, so that the name of Nantucket is as well known in astronomical circles as it once was the world over in the greatest days of Nantucket whaling. During the war, when European astronomers were suffering from privation, she sent a constant stream of parcels containing food and clothing to those in need abroad. In these and other ways she has made an important contribution to astronomy and also to the international understanding we so desperately need today.

For the many of us who have known her during these years on Nantucket, it is hard, in fact almost impossible, to imagine the Association, the Observatory, or the town without her. It is hard to realize that she has reached retirement age, and that it is time for someone else to carry on the work and to continue to build on the foundation she has laid down. Yet, several years ago, she herself realized that a date for her retirement must be set, and thought must be given to the choice of a new director. In June, 1955, when she was 70, the Board of Managers voted this retirement. At her request, however, the period was extended by two years to June, 1957, to allow her to finish her life-long work on the Scutum Cloud.

As this time now approaches, the Board of Managers announces her retirement with deep regret, yet with faith in the future in which the work she has begun will be carried out by her successor, Dr. Dorritt Hoffleit, one of the ablest women astronomers in the country, who knows and loves Nantucket from her many visits.

## She Found Golden Opportunity In Small Town.

Editorial from  
The Falmouth Enterprise

To our young people who sometimes feel there is no golden future for them in a small town, we recommend the story of young Margaret Harwood who stepped off the boat on Nantucket 45 years ago.

A Radcliffe graduate, Miss Harwood went to Nantucket on a four-year fellowship at the Maria Mitchell Observatory. Her young mind was fascinated by the mysteries of the heavens and for a career she was following in the footsteps of the Nantucket woman whose name is perpetuated in the name of the observatory. Maria Mitchell made her own fame when she turned from island school teaching to discover her first comet in 1847. She

became Vassar's professor of astronomy and the first woman member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Her bust was placed in the Hall of Fame in 1922.

Miss Harwood has never left Maria Mitchell Observatory, though her four years has lengthened into near half a century. Two years over the organization's retirement age, she will retire next May at 72. She will be succeeded by Dr. Dorritt Hoffleit, a research assistant in astronomy at Yale.

The professional lifetime of Margaret Harwood has been spent in a small town, on a small island, in the service of a small institution. She has reached beyond these limitations to achieve a notable career in astronomy for herself. She has worked at Har-

AUG 14 1956

Dec 22 1956

Dec 11 1951

43



# Noted Nantucket Figure to Retire

## Observatory Director Has Served 45 Years

Special to The Standard-Times

NANTUCKET, Nov. 30—After 45 years of devoted service, Miss Margaret Harwood will retire as director of the Maria Mitchell Observatory here next June 1.

In 1912 she was appointed the first astronomy fellow of the Maria Mitchell Association. She held this post for four years and in 1916 was appointed director of the observatory.

The observatory was founded more than 100 years ago by Maria Mitchell of Nantucket, America's first woman astronomer and the first professor of astronomy at Vassar College.

### Has Lectured to Thousands

For 45 years Margaret Harwood has worked for the good of the Maria Mitchell Association, the observatory and the Town of Nantucket, as well as for the world of astronomy. Through all these years she has welcomed thousands of visitors and lectured to them on the regular Monday open nights in Summer.

In the Winter she has shown hundreds of school children "the wonders of the universe" through the telescope. As these children have grown she has taught them navigation; they have become her assistants in the observatory.

In many cases she has helped them get scholarship aid, so that they could go "off-island" to college. She has further expressed

her interest in education by her work as a member of the Nantucket School Committee.

### Studies Milky Way

At the same time, she has carried on her own research. She has personally taken well over 1,000 plates of the sky, particularly of her favorite region, the Scutum Cloud in the Milky Way, in which area she has made a long and painstaking study of the variable stars.

She has helped to train women in astronomy through her work with college students during the Summers. She has welcomed astronomers from all parts of the world to her hospitable cottage beside the observatory on Vestal Street. Because of her, the name of Nantucket is as well known in astronomical circles as it once was the world over in the great days of Nantucket's whaling industry.

During the war, when European astronomers were suffering from privation, she sent a constant stream of parcels containing food and clothing abroad. In these and other ways she has made an important contribution to astronomy and also to international understanding.

### Director Will Be Missed

For the many Nantucketers who have known her during these years it is hard to imagine the observatory without her. It is hard to realize she has reached retirement age, and that it is time for someone else to carry on the work.

Yet, several years ago, she herself realized a date for her retirement must be set, and thought must be given to the choice of a new director. In June 1955, when she was 70, the board of managers voted this retirement. At her request, however, the period



MISS MARGARET HARWOOD

was extended for two years to allow her to finish her life-long work on the Scutum Cloud.

The board of managers announces her retirement with deep regret. Her successor will be Dr. Dorritt Hoffleit, one of the ablest women astronomers in the country. Dr. Hoffleit knows and loves Nantucket from her many visits here.

Dec. 1, 1956

### Maria Mitchell Meeting Honors Miss Harwood.

The annual meeting of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association was held in the Library of the Association on Saturday afternoon, April 27. President Charles Gerald Snow opened the meeting at three o'clock and called for the reports of the secretary, Mrs. Louise Young, and the treasurer, Miss Marjorie Barrett. The report of the curator, Miss Marjorie Weirich, was read by Mrs. Charles Amey.

Miss Margaret Harwood, director of the Observatory, who will retire the first of June after 45 years in the position, presented a most interesting report on the work carried on during the past year. She then gave an outstanding summary of her 45 years here, stating that they had "gone very fast". She first saw Nantucket in a fog, not a very cheerful welcome for a person whose life work depended on clear skies.

She spoke of the pioneer work carried on in the Observatory, of the changes made during her span of service. She particularly mentioned the difficulties involved in getting the photographic telescope in use in 1913. Between its arrival in a hurricane, which rough passage to the island threw its lens out of kilter, and subsequent sabotage, it was many months before the telescope was operating efficiently. The lens slipped again just before the total eclipse of the sun in 1924, making it necessary for her and her assistants to work "round the clock" in order to be able to photograph the eclipse.

Work done by her on zodiacal light was scoffed at in its early stages, but is now considered very valuable. Her study of variable asteroids was most intensive as she found from her many photographic plates that they varied from night to night. It was this work and her report on it which led to her membership in the International Astronomical Union. Photographing and studying the resulting plates of variable stars has been the major work carried on at the Observatory and has been of inestimable importance in the astronomical work carried on by other astronomers in other observatories.

Miss Harwood said she considered herself most fortunate in having been chosen for her position here as she was one of 13 applicants and had taught herself all she knew about astronomy, following her graduation from Radcliffe College. She was told, when she came here, that the Maria Mitchell Association was to be a scientific center for Nantucket and she should do everything possible to help the children of the island. That she has done, as the many hundreds of Nantucket boys and girls will vouch for. During the 45 years she has been here, Miss Harwood has held "open evenings" for children in the schools, has conducted classes in navigation, and has given many hours to the instruction of the Boy and Girl Scouts in preparation for their badges.

In closing her most interesting and informal report, Miss Harwood paid tribute to Maria Mitchell and said she was very grateful in 1911 for the opportunity given to her and that she had never ceased to feel that gratitude throughout the intervening years.

The librarian's report was presented by Mrs. Allen E. Norcross, who stressed the increased interest shown by the school children in the opportunities offered by the library. Mr. Clinton Andrews read the report of Dr. Edwin Betts, the director of Natural Science, which report again stressed growth in the work carried on by the organization. A brief report on membership was given by Mrs. Francis W. Davis, who said 57 new members had joined the Association during the past year.

President Snow gave a report on the Board of Managers meeting, which had been held on Friday afternoon. Miss Weirich, Mrs. Norcross, and Dr. Betts were re-appointed to their positions of curator, librarian, and director of Natural Science respectively, and Dr. Dorritt Hoffleit was appointed director of the Maria Mitchell Observatory and would arrive the first of May.

Mr. Snow also reported that the Board had voted to publish a new book on Nantucket wildflowers, on which Mrs. Alfred Shurrocks has been working for several years.

He also called the attention of the members to the fact that the garden at the rear of Memorial House has been landscaped and planted, and is now as near as possible in arrangement as it was in the days when Maria Mitchell lived there.

He mentioned that in August Miss Mitchell is to be featured in the United States Savings Bonds advertisements, with facts based on Miss Helen Wright's book "Sweeper in the Sky", and the picture to be used will be the one carried in the frontispiece of the Association's annual report.

Mr. Snow spoke highly of the work of Miss Margaret Harwood and called upon her to receive a gift from the members of the Association who had contributed during the past winter. Miss Harwood, obviously moved by the gift, accepted it with much appreciation.

The report of the nominating committee was read by Mrs. Hans E. Moller and it was voted that the secretary cast one ballot for the election of the following officers: President, Charles G. Snow; vice-presidents, William C. Brock, Richard M. Hinchman, Mrs. Roger Merrill, Jr.; secretary, Mrs. Louise Young; treasurer, Miss Marjorie Barrett; board of managers for three years, Mrs. William L. Mather, and Stokeley W. Morgan.

Before closing the meeting, Mr. Snow announced that the Board of Managers had voted that no charge would be made to Nantucket children for any services rendered by the Association.

Refreshments of cookies and punch were served by Miss Wright, Mrs. Merrill, and Miss Barrett and a social hour was enjoyed, with Miss Harwood as the guest of honor.

### Miss Harwood Honored At Radcliffe College.

Miss Margaret Harwood, a Radcliffe College alumna and Nantucket's beloved astronomer, was awarded an honorary citation last Saturday at the annual Radcliffe Alumnae Day luncheon in Memorial Hall in Cambridge.

Miss Harwood, who has recently retired as Director of the Maria Mitchell Observatory after 45 years' service, is the eleventh recipient of the Graduate Chapter Medal awarded for distinguished achievement.

A member of the class of 1907 at Radcliffe, which celebrated its 50th reunion last weekend, Miss Harwood received her Master's Degree in Astronomy from the University of California. A four-year fellowship brought her to Nantucket in 1912, after which she became director of the Observatory.

She is a member of the American Astronomical Society, is a fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, and has served as a director of the International Astronomical Union. Here in Nantucket she has served on the School Committee and as a Trustee of the Nantucket Cottage Hospital. She is a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

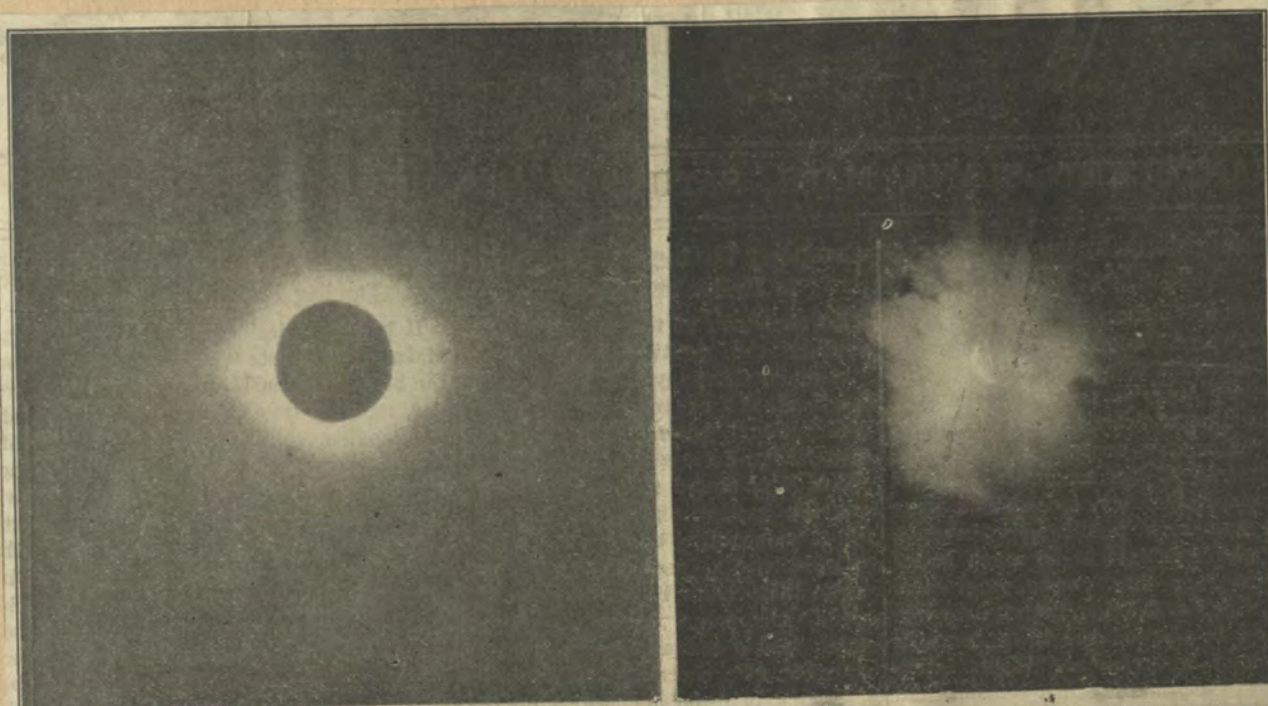
The citation presented to Miss Harwood reads: "In recognition of long and devoted studies of the stellar variations that are indices of the evolution of stars."

May 4, 1957

June 15, 1957



# ADDITIONAL ECLIPSE PHOTOGRAPHS---AUG. 31, 1932



Upper left—The total eclipse and corona as photographed at North Truro by the group from the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Observatory under Miss Margaret Harwood.

Upper right—The eclipse as photographed at Nantucket by Alvin E. Paddock, who was assisted by Stanley Roy and Ralph Hammond.

Centre left—The Nantucket group with the camera mounted on top of the Aldrich tower at North Truro. From left to right, Samuel Aldrich, Miss Merle Turner, Gerald Reed, Jr., Miss Harwood, Miss Marjorie Williams.

Centre right—Capt. "Tom" Smith, of North Truro, who insisted that Miss Harwood did not have her instruments "pinted" at the right angle to photograph the eclipse. Samuel Aldrich standing beside the Cape Codder.

Lower—The group with the photometer on the Aldrich tower. From left to right, Warner Ericson, Edgar Sanborn, Alexander Hoyle.





Nantucket had a front seat for the total eclipse of the sun on Saturday, January 24, 1925—the first Nantucket has witnessed for 447 years, which was long before the white men settled in America and before Columbus sailed across the broad Atlantic. Everything that everybody had hoped for happened that morning, with nothing to mar the success of Nature's most impressive spectacle.

The sunrise did not seem to be much different than any other morning—except that it was ushering the greatest show that this island has witnessed since 1478. There was a haze in the sound which made it impossible to "pick up" the lightships and a deep bank hung close to the eastern horizon. A light air was moving from the northwest and the temperature was at 5 degrees above zero.

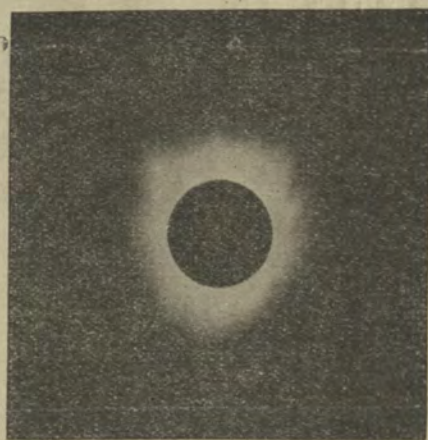
Nantucket was just beginning to wake up when the newspaper folk climbed to the loft in the south tower, reaching the top puffing and blowing as the result of the strenuous exercise while wrapped in an extra supply of clothing. They went there to "cover" the eclipse and to see whether dawn on such a momentous occasion was any different from the dawn on any other day.

All five had been told what to expect, but as none had ever seen a total eclipse before, they went aloft a half hour before sunrise to make careful note of the changing conditions and there they stayed until it was all over, with nothing but an abundance of enthusiasm to keep them warm during the three chilly hours.

The weather man certainly did his very best, even if the temperature was rather low for Nantucket. A clear air and a cloudless sky were what everybody had been praying for, and the conditions could not have been improved upon, with the possible exception of the chilly morning. That was one time when everything worked together, something that does not always happen for "world's series," football games, community festivals, etc. This time it was a nation-wide "show" that could not have been improved upon.

The coldest place on earth just then—in the minds of the five persons perched there last Saturday morning—was the loft in the south tower. Temperature 5 above zero; wind blowing fresh from the northwest; everything open below, above and around; cold feet, cold hands, cold ears, cold noses; not even a cup of hot coffee for cheer and comfort—nothing but experience and enthusiasm to warm one up. And the only one getting any exercise at all was the reporter who sat on one of the tiny benches, with his feet braced against the centre timber, thumping a portable type-writer which rested on his knees. Three hours' vigil, watching the grandeur of nature, so that the world might read all about it as seen from the highest viewpoint on the island. But whatever the cold, whatever the experience, whatever the discomfort—it was well worth it all!

### Total Eclipse at Nantucket Most Impressive.



ECLIPSE OF THE SUN  
Showing the "Corona." From a photograph taken by Miss Harwood at the Maria Mitchell Observatory in Nantucket, Saturday morning, January 24, 1925.

### Maria Mitchell Observatory Made Valuable Pictures and Observations

Miss Margaret Harwood, in charge of the Maria Mitchell Observatory on Vestal street, had careful plans laid for covering every phase of the eclipse, with a corps of well-trained assistants. There was not a hitch anywhere during the phenomenon—everything worked according to schedule and the result of the observations, the astronomical data secured, the photographs taken, will be most valuable to science and astronomers. Here on Nantucket the sun was at the highest point at the time of totality of any place in its path and this island was the last bit of land to witness the corona.

Prof. Edward S. King, of Harvard, assisted Miss Harwood in her work and was in charge of the "deck," operating the corona photometer. With him also from Harvard, was Miss Cecilia H. Payne. So carefully were their plans laid and so perfectly did the schedule work, that six exposures were made of the corona. The details of the work at the observatory and of the results secured are told in detail by Miss Harwood elsewhere.

\* \* \*

Vestal street was closed to traffic during the hours of the eclipse, in order that the astronomers might work undisturbed. Officers Mooney and Chadwick were on duty at the entrances to the street at the time.

The roosters commenced crowing just before totality and they kept everlastingly at it, and then the dogs started barking. Heard from the tower the sounds were rather awesome, especially with the town fading away and the sun going out of business.

It was interesting to note the different points of vantage which the townspeople took at the time of the eclipse. Not everybody went to Mill Hill, by any means. The "widows walks" were quite easily reached and little groups could be seen on many of them. Scuttles were thrown back and householders emerged, some of them muffled to the ears. Several men took the view from the top of the town building, one or two men mounted the top of the gas holder, while the Island Service Company's office force climbed to the top of the ice-factory. A couple of lads were noticed astride the arm on a telephone pole. A lady was seated out in her back yard apparently wrapped in a dozen or two shawls or blankets and quite comfortable indeed. Some of the telephone operators were grouped together on the south side of the building and chatted and stamped and watched every feature of the big show. Store-keepers on Main street stood on the sidewalks and let business take care of itself, while Tammany adjourned to the other side of the street for the occasion. All over town windows were thrown up and many a family lot of breakfast dishes lapsed over until dinner time, while the house-wives gave full attention to the eclipse and forgot that it was Saturday morning and "cooking day." Altogether, practically everybody went to the big show, even if everybody did not go together. But it was a real show in every sense and the sight of the corona was something that will never be forgotten.

Feb. 7, 1925

### Carnegie Gives \$10,000 to the Maria Mitchell Memorial.

In response to a request from a number of the Vassar faculty, Andrew Carnegie has promised to give to the Maria Mitchell Memorial Association a sum of \$10,000 toward the establishment of a research fellowship in astronomy, on condition that the sum of \$5,000 required to complete the fund be also subscribed. As the amount has already been promised, the association hopes to complete its desired fund of \$25,000 in a short time, having \$10,000 in hand. The association was founded in order to establish a suitable memorial to Maria Mitchell, a distinguished astronomer, who was a professor at Vassar for twenty-three years. After buying the house in which she was born, situated on the island of Nantucket, and starting a museum in it, the association decided to establish a research fellowship in astronomy in her memory. It is to be awarded to any woman properly qualified, who may be a graduate of any college. She is to carry on original investigation at an approved observatory, and will be known as the Nantucket Maria Mitchell research fellow.

—Boston Transcript.

Jan. 7, 1911



## Maria Mitchell Observatory Announces Open Nights.

During the summer season the Maria Mitchell Observatory again plans to hold open house on Monday evenings from June 24 through September 9. The new director, Dr. Dorrit Hoffleit, is arranging a series of twelve lectures covering various branches of astronomy; nor will it be necessary to attend any one of the lectures in order to understand some future one of the series. Come to any or come to all.

The first talk, on June 24, is on "The Role of the Maria Mitchell Observatory." Here, as befitting a memorial to our first American woman astronomer, special attention will be given to American women in astronomy. Early in August the emphasis will be on meteors, commonly called "shooting stars". The Perseid meteors should yield their richest display at that time, but unfortunately a bright moon will spoil much of the beauty of that show. The relationship between comets and meteors will be explained.

As under Miss Harwood's directorship, much of the research work at the Maria Mitchell Observatory will deal with variable stars. Galactic structure is one of the chief scientific interests of the new director and variable stars are one of the important tools in this branch of astronomy. It is concerned with discovering how the stars in the Milky Way are really distributed in three-dimensional space, as contrasted with how they are seen projected on the sky. How far away from us are the stars, and how distant from one-another? Several of the lectures will deal with this fascinating problem. Many tricks of the trade are needed to map our own position in the universe. Some of the tricks and more of the answers will be presented in relatively simple terms. But don't expect all the answers! Despite the great age of science of astronomy, more remains unanswered than what has been firmly established about the universe.

The lectures will start at 8 p.m. and last a half to three-quarters of an hour. After that the telescopes of the Observatory will be available for observing planets, stars or other suitable objects, provided, of course, that the weather permits. Stars cannot be seen through overcast skies. Instead, on rainy nights exhibits of astronomical material will be on display in the library and observatory.

There will be a charge of \$0.50 per person for admission to each of the open nights. Children under age 12 will be admitted without charge, but they must be accompanied by an adult. As in the past, members of the Maria Mitchell Association are admitted free by simply showing their membership cards at the door. Anyone interested in the aims and activities of the Association is eligible for membership upon payment of the customary fees.

The evenings listed in the program below are the *only* times this summer

when the observatory will be open to visitors.

June 24, "The Role of the Maria Mitchell Observatory"; July 1, "Our Place in the Milky Way"; July 8, "Variable Stars"; July 15, "The Light and Heat of the Stars"; July 22, "The Fixed Stars Move"; July 29, "Balloons and Astronomy"; August 5, "Shooting Stars—Perseids in Particular"; August 12, "Gas, Dust and Meteoroids in the Universe"; August 19, "Spectacular Stars—the Supernovae"; August 26, "The Planets Today"; September 2, "Other Galaxies than Ours"; and September 9, "On the Fulfillment of Predictions in Astronomy".

## Miss Harwood Speaker At Inter-Faith Meeting.

The annual Inter-Faith meeting of the Women's Alliance of the Unitarian Church was held Wednesday afternoon in the vestry of the church. The capacity of the vestry was taxed to overflowing with the members, friends and guests who had gathered to hear the speaker of the afternoon, Miss Margaret Harwood, director of the Maria Mitchell Observatory from 1916 until 1957.

Mrs. Estelle Coggins, president of the Alliance, introduced the speaker, saying, in part, that doubtless many had come to hear the speaker because they had heard her on previous occasions and would not miss this opportunity to hear a favorite, well-known, and honored citizen. One who, though not a "native" Nantucketer, has for so many years lived and worked here that all think of her with affection and respect.

Miss Harwood gave a brief resumé of the trips which she has made to attend the meetings of the International Astronomical Union, which was formed soon after World War I and held its first meeting in Brussels, Belgium, in 1919.

Although she was unable to attend the meetings in 1923 because she was working in Peru for Harvard Observatory, Miss Harwood was elected to membership that year and has since attended the sessions of International Astronomical Union which are held once every three years.

In 1928, Leiden, Holland, was the host city; in 1932, Cambridge, Mass.; in 1935, Paris, France. In 1938 the meetings were held in Stockholm, and, in 1948, Miss Harwood went to Zurich, Switzerland. Although Russia had made a bid for the meetings, and continued to do so, the Assembly did not approve their invitations and, in 1952, the Union members gathered in Rome. However, this year, 1958, the meetings will be held in Russia, but Miss Harwood does not plan to attend.

In August, 1955, the meetings were held in Dublin, Ireland, and it was this trip which was the subject of Miss Harwood's talk as she showed the interesting and colorful pictures which she took during her visit to Ireland, Scotland, Milford Haven (Wales), Cornwall, the Isle of Wight, and London.

On her previous trip to Rome, Miss Harwood stated she had flown on the "Star Gazer," but this trip they left Boston on the "Splendid" and she soon went to sleep to be hurriedly awakened in the middle of the night and told to fasten her seat belt. She aroused only enough to do this and did not know that they had passed through a severe thunder storm until the next morning.

They arrived safely at Shannon airport and went directly to Limerick where they spent a very warm day. Despite the uncomfortable heat, she had pictures of the old stone bridge, the King John's Stone, and interesting streets. After a few hours' stay, they went on to Dublin. The Hibernian Hotel, as pictured, a pretty white building with red trimmings, was most comfortable, and, from there, they crossed the exceedingly attractive park each day to attend the meetings at the University buildings. The park had long rows of chairs, a lovely lake with white swans, and beautiful flowers in profusive bloom. Especially were the marigolds and heliotrope colorful.

600 members of the International Astronomical Union from all parts of the world attended these meetings. Miss Harwood showed a group picture of the entire membership, pointing out several persons familiar to her audience as they had spent time here on Nantucket. The Russian delegation arrived en masse and continued to work collectively! Miss Harwood pointed out the woman in their delegation who was the Russian scientist pictured in *Time* magazine at the time Sputnik I was launched.

The delegates were assigned to commissions or committees according to the type of work they were doing, and these small sessions were often long and tiring, allowing each individual to describe his or her work in detail and thereby promoting much discussion.

The Observatory at Dublin is some seven miles from the city and trips were made there. There were many side trips arranged for the "ladies" who accompanied the delegates, but Miss Harwood could not avail herself of these interesting sightseeing excursions as she was an astronomer and not a "lady" as one friend put it. However, all the American and English members of the Union were invited to the American Embassy, which was then presided over by Mr. and Mrs. William Howard Taft, III. The major domo announced a titled Englishman and, when Miss Harwood told him she was "plain Margaret Harwood from Nantucket," he failed to say a word. However, Mrs. Taft, young and delightful, heard "Nantucket" and was most pleased that she had a guest from a place which she loved so much!

In spite of being an astronomer, Miss Harwood did see some of the country side, the scattered farms, the old stone walls, fields of grain, and the Redwood tree which the Prince of Wales, Edward VII, brought from California and planted, the beautiful lakes and many castles. She might have had a gig ride to Killarney, but the gig drivers decided to strike instead of taking the 600 delegates to ride.

After the sessions were completed, Miss Harwood did go to Belfast, which she found attractive, and to Scotland, Loch Lomond, Inverness with its deep blue lakes and steep mountains, and to the Isle of Skye with its patches of heather, the red and purple slopes looking much like Nantucket. Too, she stopped at Armagh, one of Ireland's oldest cities which St. Patrick founded in the 8th century and where Eric Lindsey is director of the Observatory. Dr. Lindsey's wife is an American whom he met while he was studying at Harvard. Miss Harwood also visited the Royal Astronomical Society in Glasgow.

From Ireland and Scotland, Miss Harwood went to Milford Haven, the English seaport to which a group of Nantucket whaling men and their families moved in 1792. She was met on her arrival there by an official greeter and invited to attend an evening reception in her honor, which she did, protesting that she was not a "native" Nantucketer. She had several interesting pictures to show of the old cobbled stone streets, the Friends Meeting House, and the harbor, which is truly magnificent. Several of her pictures were duplicates of those which Mr. and Mrs. George Jones took on their trip and which can be found in the January, 1957, issue of "Historic Nantucket."

From Milford Haven, Miss Harwood went to the Isle of Wight with Miss Helen Wright, author of "Sweeper in the Sky," where they visited and pictured the ancient home of the Mitchell family before they came to

America, to Nantucket. The thatched houses, the rugged sea line, the cliffs, and the manor house were all pictured. From the Isle of Wight they went to London Town, where she barely missed seeing the Duke of Edinburgh while he was being given special attention at the Royal Astronomical Society there.

Last, but by no means least, Miss Harwood's pictures of the comet, which was visible in our Northern sky for several days last year, and the fields of stars which contain those unstable stars and solar flares, at the outer edge of the Milky Way, which she continues to study, were shown. Thus, in her retirement, Miss Harwood is engaged in her favorite project: study of variable stars.

Expressing the thanks of a most appreciative audience to Miss Harwood for her fine pictures and interesting commentary on her trip to the International Astronomical Union meetings in Dublin and her sojourn to the homes of early Nantucketers in England, Mrs. Coggins invited all to remain for the social hour and tea which followed. The tea was supervised by Mrs. Charles Varin, assisted by Mrs. Sydney Coffin and Mrs. George Du Bock, and was a pleasant and fitting close to a most successful annual Inter-Faith meeting of the Alliance.

A. P. R.





'I think astronomy is born in a person. . . . My father knew the constellations. I began getting interested when I was about six.'

## Star-Gazing Is Her Life

# Meet Margaret Harwood

STORY BY MARGARET M. DICKIE AND PICTURES BY WINFIELD I. PARKS JR.

Going to the moon?

It's the opinion of at least one astronomer that people would only clutter up the moon once they ran out of oxygen.

Lively Miss Margaret Harwood, who has been observing the solar system from the Maria Mitchell Observatory at Nantucket for some 45 years, chuckled over the current rage to shuttle through space.

"I want to say, 'Hold back. Learn something about astronomy first,'" she told a summer school session at Brown University last week.

Seventy-three-year-old Miss Harwood, who retired last year as director of the Maria Mitchell Memorial, has done her part to educate Nantucket residents and visitors in the ways of outer space.

When people come to her observatory, built in memory of the first woman astronomer in America, she shows them not only how to manage a telescope but what to look for.

"People tell me they never really saw anything out of a telescope before. All they need to know is what to look for," the friendly star gazer said.

In preparation for the total eclipse at Nantucket Jan. 24, 1925, Miss Harwood started in August to get people in-

terested and her equipment readied. The eclipse occurred in five above zero weather; but the Nantucket observers were ready and Miss Harwood managed to get some good pictures.

### Rain Spoiled Show

She wasn't sure how it would work out since she had saved all her money in 1923 to go to California for the eclipse there on Sept. 10. It rained and ruined the show.

Although Miss Harwood has inspired many amateur astronomers during their visits to her observatory, she doesn't urge the field as a profession.

"Astronomy is a small field and unless someone cannot keep away from it, I don't encourage them," she said.

Nonetheless, the director of the University of Michigan's observatories calls her his "mother in astronomy." He was a science student at Harvard when he came down to Nantucket one summer to work as a bellhop. The man he worked for had taken one of Miss Harwood's courses during the winter and talked to him about it. Soon he was a frequenter of the observatory and when he went back to college, he changed to an astronomy course.

Miss Harwood herself went

to Nantucket on a fellowship shortly after the memorial was built. She had been graduated from Radcliffe in 1907 and had taken the only course it offered in astronomy.

"I always supposed I'd be a regular teacher; but I thought I'd go up to the Harvard Observatory for a year of independent study just to learn a little more," she recounted.

### Took Post in 1916

After that year, she went to Nantucket and stayed for the three-year term of the fellowship and, after studying for another year at the University of California, she returned to Nantucket and became director of the observatory in 1916.

"I think astronomy is born in a person," she said.

"I lived on a hill in Littleton, Mass., and my father knew the constellations. I began getting interested when I was about six. I didn't know much about it and I hadn't done much work in it until I came to Nantucket," the grandmotherly Miss Harwood modestly claimed.

There was no photographic telescope at first and Miss Harwood said she wasted a lot of her time getting good equipment. During the war, some of the equipment was

almost ruined by a German saboteur, she said.

She works mainly in photometry, the measurement of the light of stars. She has enough work in her own field of observing variable stars to keep her busy for the rest of her days, she said.

This year she will be spending her time on a bibliography of astronomical literature of the United States for the years 1881-1896, a project requested of her for the International Astronomical Union.

"Now, in this union, we don't talk much about salaries or seven-hour days. We just discuss co-operative research," the gray-haired lady quipped.

She was proud to say that the astronomers are the only scientists still corresponding with the Russians.

## Astronomical Society Holding Meeting on Nantucket.

Some 95 members of the American Association of Variable Star Observers arrived on Nantucket this week for the largest and longest meeting in the society's records. The four-day conference drew star-watchers from posts as distant as Montreal, Canada, and Denver, Colo. On hand to greet them were Mrs. R. Newton Mayall, Director of the Association and Dr. Dorrit Hoffleit, Director of the Nantucket Observatory.

Thursday's group were welcomed with a punch party at the Maria Mitchell House and a guided tour of the Scientific Library. Guides were six fifth-graders from the Academy Hill School: Betsy Clements, Joanne Glidden, Ellen Grant, Betty Hardy, Arline Plucinski, and Roberta Waine. Dressed in Quaker costume (courtesy of Mrs. Phoebe Taylor and Mrs. Margaret Fawcett Wilson), they beguiled visitors with an easy knowledge of planetary phenomena.

On exhibit was a model of the sun, earth, and moon, assembled by the Misses Clements and Plucinski from "things lying around." Ingeniously handled, a curtain rod and a pencil sharpener assumed astronomical meaning.

D. de B.

Jan. 14, 1958

Providence Evening

Bulletin

July 28, 1958



## William Mitchell's former Schoolhouse to be used as Library. 1919

The friends of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association will be interested to hear that the Association has become the owner of the one-time school-house, in which William Mitchell, the father of Maria Mitchell, taught, prior to 1837. The building has been owned for many years by Mrs. Charles Woodbridge and used as a barn. It is situated on Vestal street, (near Main street Monument) opposite to the house, where Miss Mitchell was born. The Association will move the building to the west end of the lot, where it formerly stood and will make various alterations, always trying to preserve the old style of architecture, and use it as a Library room for their many valuable books on the Modern Natural Sciences.—advertisement.

Apr. 9, 1919

## Spirit of Great Maria Active at Library.

"Miss Mitchell is busy. Do not knock." This forbidding legend hand-printed by Nantucket's great astronomer on a little card reposes among other relics in the library of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association in Vestal Street. One can imagine it hanging on her door at Vassar while she studied and taught the lessons of the stars. Yet the white wooden gate of the free library established here in her honor swings open willingly to any person in quest of reading pleasure and information.

Just now, an exhibit of work by Nantucket students who have profited by attendance at the library is on view. Here is an original treatise on Spain made into book form by the author, Marjorie Bartlett, with colored maps and even an insert showing Spanish dance costumes. Marjorie did her research under the aegis of Maria Mitchell.

Another student who will be helped along in her school credits through "looking up things" in the library is Paula Dunham. Her large pamphlet, hand-written and illustrated, is on Tibet. Eunice Roop chose Turkey and in another homemade volume has summarized its economics, history, and politics, even placing some grains of Turkish tobacco among the plates. She has also illustrated a book on state trees. Paul Reyes has done similar things with the Philippines.

A man appeared the other day seeking a book on how the Indians made arrow heads. The librarian, Mrs. Allen Norcross, quickly produced it. When the visitor returned, he showed an arrow head he had made out of glass according to directions.

Of course the emphasis at the library is on scientific books and publications. Probably no island off America has such a rich stock of concentrated astronomy, mathematics, physics, zoology, biology, botany, and general science. The Nantucket people deeply appreciate this

boon. Hardly an open day passes without a group of children at the desks doing research in neat, agreeable surroundings looking out on lovely gardens and a tranquil street. Not a few take note, with an eye to their own future, that Maria Mitchell studied here, too, before achieving world fame, and that the 18th century part of the library was the schoolhouse where her father, William, taught.

The same Eunice Roop who has become a school expert on far-off Turkey and on trees as state emblems has an eighth grade ambition to become a fashion stylist. As a typical act of service, the library sent off-island for a book on la mode, Curtis' "Careers in the World of Fashion". Miss Roop is now poring over it.

There could hardly be a more enthusiastic librarian, or one more proud of her job, than Mrs. Norcross. Her assistants, Mrs. Paul Boehlert, and Miss Eileen McGrath, a native Nantucketer teaching in Providence, who comes for the busy summer, are equally helpful. Miss Margaret Harwood is the director of the nearby observatory and head of the general staff.

The stacks contain a good many more than 6,000 volumes. It would be hard to find any novels or fiction. Yet to a larger and larger part of the reading public, scientific lore is the most fascinating of all. There is much that Maria Mitchell did not and could not know during her 23 years as a professor at Vassar. The marvel of it is that she knew so much and that her influence is still so strong on Nantucket. One can imagine, with relish, how Maria would have reacted to seeing a 'teen-ager in dungarees sitting at a table reading "How a Bomber Works". One of the many new books, "The Work of Eli Whitney", would have been more familiar to her than "Great Adventures in Medicine". Hers was the simpler world of "Two Steps Down", as described in the recent book by her cousin, Alice Albertson Shurrocks. But she would have analyzed better than most moderns such

## HISTORY OF THE LIBRARY

In October, 1902, a circular was sent out by a committee proposing The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association, and inviting to membership Vassar professors or graduates, friends of Professor Maria Mitchell and others interested in science or in Nantucket.

The first response came from her brother, Henry Mitchell, who enrolled himself and his daughter as members, and stated that his sister had left her Scientific Library by will to him. This he offered to donate to the Association, adding: "I shall be glad to turn them over as my gift in her name. . . . Many of the books were gifts to her and bear the names of distinguished people."

This was the nucleus of the present Scientific Library, which, by gifts and purchase, has grown slowly but steadily.

On the 30th of July, 1919, the Association acquired the building dedicated July 15, 1920. Situated opposite the Memorial House, the convenience of its location commended itself to us, and the fact that it was occupied as a school house by William Mitchell, father of Professor Mitchell, gives it an especial interest. The exact date when he taught in the Vestal Street building does not appear to be recorded. It was certainly prior to 1837. That his school was very popular and well attended tradition, derived from various sources, abundantly testifies.

No spot and building could be more fitting for the Library in memory of William Mitchell's daughter.

recently acquired times as "The Atmosphere of Earth and Planets", "The Creation of the Universe", and "Across the Space Frontier".

"The Treasure House of Vestal Street", as one might well call the library, is open every week day in summer starting Tuesday. It has been open Tuesdays and Thursdays all winter. It is free for reference and for lending and has more than 3,000 visitors a year.

One of the special aims is the encouragement of Nantucket children who might otherwise feel more isolated in the scientific reading world than those on the mainland. That they respond well and appreciate the pleasantly given service is shown by the fact that a total of 22 have state-sponsored honor certificates showing that they have read at least 20 books.

The certificate of Terry Laundry has two stars and that of Gail Reichenberg one star. These indicate that the youthful recipients have explored the fields of science way beyond the 20-book mark. Knowledge is fun at the Maria Mitchell Library.

June 15, 1953

## Oak From Madaket Ditch In Natural Science Department.

In the last issue of The Inquirer and Mirror, March 14, 1931, under the heading, "Large Oak Trees on Nantucket", "a large oak stump" is described, "about two feet in diameter", in the Madaket Ditch, "where it has held its place with the ditch winding around it". The article continues: "The ditch was dug by the Indians and the White settlers together away back in 1665. The Indians probably left the stump there, as it was a difficult thing to remove."

I have quoted the article thus at length in order to recall accurately to the readers of The Inquirer and Mirror the history of the stump. Through the kindness and efforts of Mr. James A. Holmes, it has now been painstakingly removed by Mr. Oliver Fisher and secured for the permanent collection of the Natural Science Department of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association, a wholly Nantucket Institution.

This oak stump is a valuable and interesting addition for this Department, not only as evidence on the question of how extensively Nantucket was formerly wooded, but also as proof of the durability of oak under water.

When the Natural Science Department opens on June 15th, visitors to the Memorial House will welcome this new addition to the permanent exhibit.

Alice Albertson Shurrocks,  
Director of Natural Science.

Mar. 1931





THE ECLIPSE OF APRIL 28th.

From a photograph taken at the Maria Mitchell Observatory in Nantucket at 4.27 p. m. (daylight time) on Monday, April 28th. The black edge of the moon has just covered the fine sun-spot that was almost exactly in the center of the sun's disc. It was an interesting sight watching the disc of the sun thrown on screens by the telescopes while the image of the moon gradually came over the lower western edge. This photo of the eclipse was taken by Miss Margaret Harwood.



EXHIBITS PHOTOGRAPHS OF EROS. Miss Margaret Harwood, only woman director of a research astronomical observatory in the world, the station at Nantucket, who recently showed lantern slides of the photographic light curve of the small planet Eros in 1930, before the 45th meeting of the American Astronomical Society at Yale University. From her photographic work, Miss Harwood has concluded that Eros has a diameter of approximately 15 miles, is of irregular shape and that varying portions of it are of materials which are of varying degrees of reflecting power.

(Boston Herald-Wide World)

## Observatory Drew 1000 Visitors, Library 4435, Natural Department 3056 In 1958, Maria Mitchell Annual Meeting Told

Some 1000 persons visited the Maria Observatory and 4453 the Science Library and 3056 the Natural Science Department of the Maria Mitchell Association last year, according to reports of officers submitted last Saturday.

Reporting on the activities for their respective departments for last year were Miss Doris Hoffleit, astronomer in charge of the Observatory; Mrs. Allen Norcross, secretary of the Science Library; Miss Marion E. Hill, in charge of the Natural Science Department and Miss Marjorie Weinrich, curator of the Memorial House.

The Observatory's 50th anniversary in 1958 was marked at a June convention of the American Association of Variable Star Observers, attended by more than 100 off-Island guests, double the number expected, Miss Hoffleit

reported.

Open nights at the Observatory drew some 700 persons, a slight decline from 739 of the previous year but Miss Hoffleit attributed the drop to weather conditions which she said affect attendance.

She added the prospects for this coming season are propitious, noting that the Office of Naval Research has awarded the Observatory "a general contract" for work on the variable stars in Sagittarius. Three college students have accepted Summer appointments at the Observatory this coming season.

Miss Hoffleit added that the American Academy of Arts and Sciences will meet here in September to honor the memory of Maria Mitchell, Nantucket astronomer who became that society's first woman member.

In her librarian report, Mrs. Norcross said the number of visitors during the year totaling 445 includes 2529 during the Summer and 2033 in the Winter. Total book circulation was 2416.

One of the new programs inaugurated at the Library was a work program drawn, on request of Elementary Principal William Perkins, for elementary pupils to study the sciences indigenous to Nantucket.

Some 152 children were enrolled in the nature classes conducted by the Natural Science Department, Miss Hill reported. The Department sponsored last season an art exhibit, featuring phases of nature and seven lectures which drew capacity audiences.

Following is the report of Dr. Hoffleit:

1958 1, 1:45:57



## Maria Mitchell Observatory To Observe Its 50th Anniversary At Open House July 15

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Maria Mitchell Observatory, the Maria Mitchell Association at its 56th annual meeting Saturday announced it will hold "Open House Day" and tea here July 15.

Mrs. Charles Amey was appointed chairman of the celebration committee to plan the event. She will name a committee to assist her.

Miss Dorritt Hoffleit, director of the Observatory, advised the meeting that the American Association of Variable Star Observers will hold its Spring meeting here June 12 through 16. It last held a meeting here in 1930. Mrs. R. Newton Mayall, director of the AAVSO, is a frequent visitor here and before her marriage was an assistant at the Observatory.

Miss Hoffleit also announced the American Astronomical Society has accepted an invitation to hold a meeting here in June 1961. Several years ago, Miss Margaret Harwood former curator of the Observatory and Charles G. Snow, Association President had invited the Society to meet here in 1958 to help celebrate the Observatory's 50th anniversary or at some convenient later time. The Society had met here in 1926 following the 1925 solar eclipse which had been visible from the observatory.

The Association which met at the library heard reports of Miss Marjorie Barrett, treasurer; Mrs. Robert Young, secretary; Mrs. Allen E. Norcross, librarian; Miss M. Ethel Hill, acting director of the Natural Science Department; Miss Hoffleit, and Miss Marjorie C. Weirich, curator of the Memorial House.

Officers were also elected. They were: Mr. Snow, president, Mrs. Roger Merrill Jr., Miss Helen Wright and Richard M. Hinchman, vice-presidents; Miss Alice M. Howland, honorary president; Mrs. Francis W. Davis, honorary vice-president; Mrs. Young, secretary; Miss Barrett, treasurer; and Edward O. Gardner and Dr. Ernest H. Menges, board of managers.

Staff reappointments made were: Miss Hoffleit, director of the Observatory; Mrs. Weirich, curator; Mrs. Norcross, librarian; and Miss Hill, acting director of Natural Science.

Proposal that the Maria Mitchell Observatory become a Summer-school or apprentice training ground for college students, especially for advanced undergraduates from the women's colleges, was made by Miss Hoffleit in her annual report.

Stating her experience with the first three Summer student assistants in 1957 has been most encouraging, the Director said: "Here they may obtain experience in the operation of a small observatory, learn some of the basic research techniques, particularly those applicable to the variable-star research, and enjoy the facilities of a well-equipped library. Some students might acquire during the Summer months material suitable for their senior honors theses.

"In order to assure this as a definite plan for the future, we should be able to count upon permanent funds for its operation. The first test year, supported by the National Science Foundation, has shown the plan to be mutually beneficial to the students and the progress of the research of the observatory. To put it on a sound permanent footing we should be able to set aside approximately \$1,000 each Summer for this specific purpose."

Two full-time and one part-time student assistants who worked at the Observatory during the Summer

were: Joan Sears, a senior majoring in astronomy at Wellesley; Choko Fujita of Japan, a graduate student at the University of Indiana; and Jocelyn Gill, recently instructor of astronomy at Mt. Holyoke, and an advanced graduate student at Yale.

Miss Hoffleit reported the most gratifying aspect of her first year here was the award of a substantial one-year grant from the Natural Science Foundation for the study of variable stars, especially in VSF 193.

"In that rich star field I had, while at Harvard, discovered some 450 hitherto unknown variable stars," she reported "bringing the total in that field to some 750. For upwards to 500 of these almost nothing is known. From Harvard College Observatory I was permitted to borrow about 200 photographs of the region. As weather permitted, these were supplemented during the Summer by plates taken with the 7 1/2-inch Cooke triplet."

Two of the students, she noted, had not previously done any work on variable stars nor determined the period of a variable star. Among them, periods of 25 variable stars were determined and some 20 stars announced as variables by Miss I. E. Woods in a Harvard Bulletin in 1927 but subsequently unconfirmed, were among the stars adequately studied. A paper on these 20 stars has been accepted for publication in a forthcoming issue of the Astronomical Journal, Miss Hoffleit said. In addition to research work

and helping at open nights, these students shared in work of taking photographs. A total of 75 photographs were taken and two variable star seminars held, the Director said.

Reporting her principal activities were in research on the variable stars in the Sagittarius field and the open-night programs, Miss Hoffleit said additional interest for both staff and public was provided by the unexpected appearance of Comet Mrkos in August and the passage of Sputnik I in October. Twelve lectures were held from June 24 to September 9. A total of 1065 persons visited the Observatory. Assisting at open nights at the observatory were: Mrs. Andrew Lowell, the Misses Fujita, Gill and Sears, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur F. Vincent, Richard C. Barrett Jr., Miss Frances Ruley, John and Marie Stackpole, Robert Van Arsdale, Fred Richrod, Edward Hillis and others.

Miss Hoffleit acknowledged the following gifts or loans of astronomical materials: loan of photographic plates from Harvard Observatory, use of lantern slides from the Whitin Observatory collection from Dr. Sarah Hill of Wellesley College, a marine sextant from MacMillan Clements, card catalogue of plates of the Harvard Observatory photographic library by Dr. Harlow Shapley, photographic printing paper by Dick Williams, volumes of the Jahresbericht for the years 1947-1952 by Dr. Dirk Brouwer, and set of Sproul Reprints by Dr. Peter van de Kamp of the Sproul Observatory, Swarthmore College.

A proposal to change the annual meeting of the Association from the Spring to the third Saturday in July was announced by Mr. Snow. The by-law change will be submitted to members before the next annual meeting.

The Island Service Company's gift of 2,000 booklets featuring Maria Mitchell and composed by Miss Helen Wright, was gratefully acknowledged by Mr. Snow. The booklets will be distributed to members, prospective members and contributors.

In response to a request of the Nantucket School Department to assist in establishing a sound science program, the Association appointed a liaison committee of resource people to work with the school.

The publication of a book, "A Grain of Mustard" by Mrs. Alfred Shurrocks is to be placed on sale July 1.

Mr. Snow noted the improvements done in the interior of the House and the cottage. He requested that Miss Harwood assist Mrs. Young in preparing material for the annual report booklet concerning the death of persons keenly interested in the Association.

Growth in use of library facilities and increase of members was noted by Mrs. Norcross in her report. Some 5456 persons visited the library and 3108 books and 147 magazines were circulated for the year, she reported. The Library which is open daily throughout the Summer and two nights a week for use of the astronomy and natural science departments, and two days and one evening from January through April, was in addition made available two other days weekly to school children and teachers, Mrs. Norcross said.

On three other afternoons in April, instruction on the use of the card catalog was given 97 students of the Junior High School by Mrs. Norcross and four different groups of Cub Scouts visited the library in February. She also assisted 35 students of

Grade 4 in identifying minerals which they had collected. She noted that a High School student, Frederick Richrod, an Explorer Scout, earned his reading merit badge through the library, and a group of girls worked toward the attainment of Girl Scout music badges through the facilities there.

Some 139 new books were purchased during the year, Mrs. Norcross noted, and the astronomy section of the library was improved by the transfer of many astronomy books and papers from the observatory by Miss Hoffleit. Popular book subjects during the year included zoology, biography, physics, astronomy, history and geology.

The painting of ceiling, walls and bookshelves a soft shade of green in the main room of the library and the installation of new fluorescent lighting has resulted in favorable comment, Mrs. Norcross stated.

Gifts to the Library and noted by Mrs. Norcross included a film projector by Dr. Walter W. Boyd, support of the Children's Book Fund by Mrs. Francis W. Davis, and bound volumes of the National Geographic Magazine by Dr. Lee Jav Whittles.

Ms 42, 1958









Photo by S. Day  
Four astronomers from different parts of the world hold an intensive discussion of one of the papers presented at the meeting of the American Astronomical Society held the first of the week at Sea Cliff Inn. Left to right are Dr. T. Kakinuma, of Nagoya University, Japan, who is doing research work at Stanford University (Calif.) Radio Observatory; Dr. A. R. Thompson, of Manchester University, England, who is in research work at Harvard University Observatory, and Dr. M. R. Kundu, from Calcutta, India, who is studying at the University of Michigan Observatory.

June 23, 1961



AMERICAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY meeting at Nanucket attracted more than 350 astronomers from all parts of the world to the 108th parley of the group. The four-day session was held at Sea Cliff Inn. Four of the astronomers are shown here discussing one of the lectures presented. Left to right, Dr. T. Kakinuma

of Nagoya, Japan, who is studying at Radio Astronomy Institute at Stanford University. Dr. A. R. Thompson of Manchester University, England; Dr. G. Swarup of Delhi, India, also at Stanford University, and Dr. M. R. Kundu of Calcutta, India, who is doing research at University of Michigan Observatory.







## Lydia S. Hinchman House

### Maria Mitchell Association Proposed Expansion.

The Maria Mitchell Association Board on August 4th voted to accept the gift of a fine old Nantucket house from the estate of the late C. Russell Hinchman. The house is in good repair and has been used for the last few years as a summer residence. This house forms the fourth in the group of the Maria Mitchell buildings on Vestal Street.

There have been the Memorial House, which is the birth place of Maria Mitchell, the Observatory and home of the resident Astronomer, and the Library. Now it is proposed that this building, which is on the corner of Vestal and Milk, be used to house a museum of Nantucket plants and animals, to hold Nature classes for children and adults, and to be a place for lectures and movies on nature lore.

There is already on hand a nucleus of material for a museum of Nantucket life. This includes a fine collection of Nantucket moths and other insects, shells, fossil shells, birds and a herbarium of seaweeds, fungi, mosses, ferns and flowering plants. There are also some very valuable flower prints. Now there will be room to display these adequately so that the public may enjoy them.

For a number of years the educational side of the Maria Mitchell Association has been growing and there has not been adequate space to expand. The Nature classes for several years have been held in the library, but this was impracticable since the Maria Mitchell is a public lending library. This year the use of the Cyrus Peirce School, kindly loaned by the town, proved necessary but it is unfortunately too far from the base of supplies. The recent bequest will solve that problem.

In order that this may mean the most to the island of Nantucket there must be a fund to finance the upkeep of the building. This will be to a large extent dependent upon contributions from those who are interested in the progress of such a worthwhile institution. Several persons have already expressed their approval of the project by making substantial gifts.

### The Lydia S. Hinchman House.

On the afternoon of July 2nd the Natural Science Department of the Natural Science Department of the formal opening at its new location, the Lydia S. Hinchman House, 7 Milk street. The many visitors were enthusiastic over the spacious setting which this fine old house affords for the science exhibits.

The house was built about 1800 by Thomas Coffin and was occupied for many years by the Charles Woodbridge family. In recent years it has been used as a summer home by the Hinchman family, but at the death of Russell C. Hinchman it came as a gift from his mother, Mrs. Lydia S. Hinchman, to the Maria Mitchell Association.

The house is now open week days for the season from 10 a. m. to 5 p. m. Exhibits of birds, insects, shells and plants may be seen here and the daily wild flower exhibit will be continued through the season. The staff is ready to answer questions in Natural Science and to give directions to visitors who may wish to observe plants or animals on the Island.

The summer activities of the Natural Science Departments are varied:

Children's Clubs will meet with Miss Winifred H. Wildes three times a week. They will be divided according to age and will welcome children from five years up.

A Story Hour for Children will be held on Tuesdays at 4 p. m.

Classes for adults, dealing with plants or animals will be organized as desired under the direction of Dr. Rice and Miss Wyatt.

Nature Walks will be held every Thursday beginning on July 12th and will start at 3 p. m. from 7 Milk st.

A series of lectures are planned for the summer. The first is set for Thursday, July 12th, at 8 p. m. when C. Russell Mason will give an illustrated lecture upon birds.

Grace Wyatt  
Director of Natural Science  
Maria Mitchell Association

JULY 14, 1945

### Fifty Famous Nantucketers.

By Grace Brown Gardner.

40.

LYDIA S. HINCHMAN

1845-1938

A book by Mrs. Hinchman, entitled "Recollections", written for private circulation among friends and relatives, contains her memories of a Nantucket childhood and girlhood in a Quaker family. It is of absorbing interest.

At that time there were two large Friends Meetings attended by half the population of the island. Much of the family social life was connected with these meetings and with the Quarter-

ly and Yearly meetings, when visiting Friends from "off island" were guests in the Nantucket homes.

Among little Lydia's earliest memories were those connected with the Cent School, where the child daily took a cent in payment of tuition. At the age of six she attended the well-known school of Hepsibeth Hussey, where she remained until she was sixteen, when she became a pupil teacher there.

A descendant of many of the early settlers of the island, her family circle was large. Her father Peleg Mitchell, Jr., and William Mitchell, the astronomer, were brothers; this made her cousin to Maria Mitchell and the other lively and clever Mitchell children, who were her playmates. After William Mitchell became cashier of the Pacific Bank he moved his family to the apartment then connected with it, and Lydia's father bought the Vestal street house. All of his children were born there. It was owned by his widow until 1902.

In 1864 Lydia Mitchell left Nantucket to teach in a school in Philadelphia where her older sister was first assistant. In 1849 she married Charles S. Hinchman of that city.

Becoming interested in historical and genealogical studies, she compiled a small volume "Early Settlers of Nantucket", as the result of her investigations. This book proved so valuable to research workers that there have been several editions, illustrated and much enlarged, and it is at present one of the books most frequently consulted by those desirous of tracing Nantucket ancestry.

To Mrs. Hinchman belongs the honor of being the founder of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association. She became interested in the idea of preserving the old Mitchell house as a memorial to her famous cousin, and, encouraged by her husband, she contacted the faculty and alumnae of Vassar College who had known Maria Mitchell as a professor there, as well as many other friends of Miss Mitchell. In 1902 the house was conveyed by deed to the Association which was formed largely through her efforts, and the foundation of the present valuable plant was laid. From that beginning has developed the Memorial House; the Astronomical Department with its brick observatory and its resident director; the Scientific Library in a separate building, once a school house where William Mitchell taught; the Natural Science Department founded by Mrs. Hinchman's sister, Mrs. Mary Ann (Mitchell) Albertson; and also the Lydia S. Hinchman House, willed to the Association by Mrs. Hinchman's son, C. R. Hinchman, as a memorial to his mother.

Nantucket has reason to be deeply grateful to Lydia S. Hinchman, and to other members of the Mitchell and Hinchman families for their valuable contributions to the cultural and scientific life of the island.

[Contributed]

### In Memoriam.

In the death of Charles S. Hinchman, of Philadelphia, Nantucket has sustained a great loss, felt not only by those who knew and valued him as a friend, but by all who recognized his name as one of the benefactors of many societies for the improvement of our town.

Through his marriage to Lydia, daughter of the highly esteemed Peleg and Mary Mitchell, he early became interested in all that concerned the welfare of Nantucket. While large business cares and ill health prevented him from becoming a "summer visitor," his interest and wise advice have been unfailing. In all the work of the Maria Mitchell Association, especially in the building of the Observatory here and in the establishment of the Maria Mitchell Memorial Fellowship, at Harvard Observatory, Mr. Hinchman's help has been invaluable.

Others will testify to his loyalty to the principles of his Quaker ancestry, as well as to the broad views of our modern life, which endeared him to all who had the privilege of his acquaintance.

Many of our town's people join in tender sympathy for his wife and children and the large circle who have lost a devoted friend.

G.

Jan. 19, 1946

Aug. 1934

Sept. 1920





Dr. Mabel A. Rice of Harwichport, art teacher, right, instructs two of her pupils who demonstrated painting still life in oils at the art exhibit of the Harwich Woman's Club. Pupils are Mrs. John Towle, left, and Mrs. Dwight Sleeper.

(Photo by Kelsey, South Chatham)

### Hinchman Wild Flower Exhibit A Fragrant Success.

From Nantucket's moors, meadows, swamps and dunes came a fragrant company of Nature's own favorites to make the annual Wild Flower Show at the Hinchman House a success. More than 500 enthusiasts attended the first day and, breaking precedent, the display continued on last Tuesday to attract almost as many more. It was a great triumph for the Maria Mitchell Association's science department and its devoted workers who had been combing the island for specimens or making arrangements for a long time in preparation.

Various amateur exhibitors outdid themselves in ingenuity. Visitors from off-island went away marvelling at the variety of growths here, which make Nantucket unique in the botany of America. At the same time, the nature classes, conducted by Miss Ethel Hill, comprising 105 boys and girls, staged an exhibition of work in the basement which is the subject of an article in another column.

One of the cleverest "trick" exhibits was composed by Mrs. Edwin Betts, wife of the University of Virginia professor who heads the science department, in honor of Mrs. Alice Shurrocks' charming Nantucket book, "Two Steps Down."

Taking two cigar boxes (Prof. Betts does not smoke) and painting them grey, Mrs. Betts arranged them in the form of a doorway with two steps. On the first step down she placed a crockery lady's slipper adorned with sprigs of heather, white Lady's Tresses and swamp azalea. The buckle on the shoe was made of a bit of red heather.

The man's shoe two steps down was filled with a highly decorative island weed — wild tobacco. Mrs. Shurrocks' book was placed in the doorway as a background. There was hardly a more pleased lady on the island Tuesday than the author.

John Rugge, an exterior decorator in the men's wear field, starred as a flower arranger with his exhibit of evergreens, daisies, weather-beaten

roots and pine cones. Mrs. Clinton Andrews filled a miniature lobster pot with goldenrod and galadea. A basket of gay-looking and decidedly aromatic herbs came from the garden of Mrs. Donald Craig. They added to a general aroma concentrated from the products of island earth that mixed in an unusual blend of perfumes.

Against the pale yellow walls of the Hinchman house dining room, stylized red flowers made their splash. A wild cucumber vine crawled across the chaste mantel above the ancient fireplace. Here was a focal point for many who came with cameras to take photographs of the floral arrangements. Round the walls were cultivated flowers to give accent, such as a collection of 39 different blooms done in a bouquet by Mr. and Mrs. William Voorneveld. Mrs. W. S. Archibald starred with Dusty Millers and deep red petunias placed in a silver dish.

One of the most unusual and painstaking exhibits was on an old mahogany table. Called "The Moors", arranged by Mrs. Clinton Andrews and Mrs. Betts, it had spidery dry growths from the countryside, specimens of mint, tiny yellow-flowered hyssop and various mosses and other living greens and blooms.

Beach plums, which are of the rose family, made a handsome bouquet since they are at their most decorative right now with the island jam-makers casting covetous eyes. Bearberries in rosy-red glow turned out to be another handsome addition to the show. Then, as a romantic touch tied to literature there was the scarlet pimpernel, which was not in blossom because, being a sun worshiper, it refuses to open indoors.

A Nantucket novelty, linked to times of the Revolution when the island was split between Tories and Rebels, was the green lichen with tiny red dots of flowers called British Soldiers. This is remindful of the and-irons which used to be called Hessians so that patriots might spit upon them.

Loosestrife turned out to be a pinkish lavender in color. Wild pepper greens, luscious mallow, now in full panoply in the ponds, cottontail grass with fuzzy-wuzzy rabbit-tail blossoms, pulses and mints, sumach, cat-o-nine-tails and althea were among rarities.

Perhaps the rarest shrub was a prickly, spiked gorse, from the garden of Alexander Hoyle, the Boston architect of the new Nantucket Hospital, said to be the only one of its kind on the island.

Mrs. Walter D. Blair, who writes as "Elizabeth Hollister Frost", set the dining room table with some of her lovely old English heather-motif plates, with sprigs of vari-colored heather at each place. Mrs. Elsie Elston of 'Sconset had a royal arrangement of gladioli. A great wreath by Mrs. Arnold Archibald of the Wauwinet House, made of lilies and roses and island vines, attracted much comment. It had cans concealed under the wreath to water the piece so that it arrived with blooms closed and opened by the hour.

A mantel in the living room bore delicately tracing water plaitain arranged as usual by Dr. Betts, an energetic organizer of the show.

Holly by Donald Craig was another engaging feature.

### Exhibition of Flower Paintings.

It is fitting that Mrs. Harold G. Chatfield, whose flower paintings have been compared by many critics of national reputation to the work of the celebrated 18th Century French artist, Redouté, should have an exhibition of her pictures of Nantucket flowers at the Lydia S. Hinchman House. It was here, while studying botany with Dr. Mabel Rice, that she discovered under the microscope the fascinating details of the structure of flowers and the lovely shapes and texture of their leaves, which she now reproduces so meticulously.

Mrs. Chatfield's paintings are accurate enough to satisfy the botanist and their composition a delight to the artist who appreciates fine drawing, as well as to everyone who loves the beauty of flowers. She has caught the spirit of the delicate pink and white blossoms of the gnarled Nantucket apple trees, the native cedar with its blue berries, the satin texture of the curled petal of our garden roses, and the threadlike coiling tendrils of sweet peas.

Her driftwood studies almost come alive. "Adrift," exquisitely drawn with pencil, looks like a twisting prehistoric animal. Faint touches of water color were put on with a brush as fine as a penpoint. Mrs. Chatfield is constantly adding to her flower studies, in her studio on Ash Street, as more and more of our summer flowers bloom. She has graciously presented to the Hinchman House her painting of a rare yellow wood lily.

She will also show her paintings of exotic orchids which were included in her recent successful exhibition at Knoedler Gallery, New York.

The exhibition here will open Monday, August 4th, and will remain for two weeks at the Lydia S. Hinchman House, 7 Milk Street. This exhibition is one of the new projects inaugurated by Professor Edwin M. Betts for the Natural Science Department of the Maria Mitchell Association.

Aug. 2, 1952

Aug 22, 1953



# Virginia Professor Directs Nantucket's Hinchman House Museum

By MINNA LITTMANN  
Standard-Times Staff Writer

NANTUCKET, July 10—For children and grownups who are intrigued by the shells, rocks and small marine creatures of Nantucket beaches, the birds they observe, and the wildflowers of this island, a dignified old house here has magnetic attraction.

Lydia Hinchman House, natural science center of the Maria Mitchell Association of Nantucket, is open to visitors June 15 to Sept. 15. Natural history classes and field trips for children are based there from early July to the season's end. A continuous display of Nantucket wildflowers scents its rooms.

The house is at 7 Milk Street, at Vestal. A little distance up Vestal Street are the Maria Mitchell Observatory, the Maria Mitchell Scientific Library and the birthplace of Miss Mitchell, America's first woman astronomer. All are maintained by the Maria Mitchell Association.

## Director Betts

Director of Hinchman House for the third year is Dr. Edwin M. Betts, professor of biology at the University of Virginia, and a man of varied interests. Persons who have visited one of Virginia's cherished historic spots, Monticello, and fallen under the spell of Thomas Jefferson, its owner and designer, should meet Dr. Betts. He is a Jefferson enthusiast and scholar, as well as a biologist.

Hinchman House program includes special events each season. A unique one last year was a talk by Dr. Betts on Thomas Jefferson's love of gardening and music. A pianist as well as a biologist, the director and Emanuel Elston, violinist, played selections from the musical library collected by Jefferson as a violinist.

Dr. Betts, a native of Raleigh, N. C., was graduated from the University of Virginia. His first choice of a career was music, and he became head of the music department of Elon College, a North Carolina college. Then he took graduate work in biology at the University of Virginia, and was elected to its faculty.

In 1944 the American Philosophical Society published "Thomas Jefferson's Garden Book," in which Dr. Betts combined the text of the garden journal kept by Jefferson with added



—Standard-Times Staff Photo

Dr. Edwin M. Betts, professor of biology at University of Virginia and author of three books on Thomas Jefferson's farm and garden interests, explores the aquarium at Hinchman House, Nantucket, of which he is director.

comment on gardens gathered from Jefferson letters.

## Another Book

This large volume was followed last year by another of more luxurious format, "Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book." Published by Princeton University Press for the American Philosophical Society, it was selected by the American Institute of Graphic Arts as one of the 50 most beautifully-designed books of 1953.

Facsimile reproductions of Jefferson's farming notes and accounts fill the first part of the book. The second, covering all aspects of farming, is made up of quotations from Jefferson's correspondence on special topics, from slaves and slavery to specific crops.

Dr. Betts did the research work on which restoration of Jefferson's gardens at Monticello was based, and also the research for restoration of the serpentine brick walls Jefferson designed for

the University of Virginia. Flowers for the gardens within the walls were chosen from the Jefferson period lists he compiled. It was he who interested the Garden Club of Virginia in undertaking the University of Virginia restoration project.

With Mrs. W. A. Perkins, he collaborated on a smaller book, "Thomas Jefferson's Flower Garden at Monticello," published in 1940.

Dr. Betts received a Guggenheim fellowship to enable him to complete his "Farm Book," which he started in 1947. This freed him for eight continuous months of research and writing. One of his richest sources, he disclosed, was the Massachusetts Historical Society Library in Boston. This contains some 7,000 Jefferson manuscript items presented by Thomas Jefferson Coolidge, whose Bostonian father, Joseph, married Ellen Randolph, a granddaughter of Jefferson.

## Summer Resident

A University of Virginia col-

league, Dr. Benjamin Franklin Dewees Runk, was responsible for bringing Dr. Betts to Hinchman House. Dr. Runk is a Nantucket Summer resident of many years standing and chairman of the natural science committee of the Maria Mitchell Association.

Dr. Betts remembered Nantucket from a visit many years before, and found the invitation to succeed the former director of Hinchman House alluring. Previously, he had taught Summers in the University of Virginia Summer school.

While Nantucket has no plants or creatures not found elsewhere, Dr. Betts pronounces it interesting in its abundance of mainland plants so far from the mainland. He notes its lack of poisonous snakes as a commendable distinction. In its typical sand dune terrain, he said, he came across many of the plants to be found in the mountainous country where the University of Virginia is located.

Outstanding change at Hinchman House since Dr. Betts and his staff took over has been the conversion of a part of the basement space into an attractive children's department with an entrance of its own.

Far more convenient than former improvised quarters of the main floor are the three gay rooms, with brick walls painted snow white relieved, in the main classroom, by a vivid rose-colored wall, pastel green tables and benches.

Here colorful charts and other wall decorations, such as a flight of butterflies, are more appropriate than in the stately rooms above. Here, too, field trip equipment can be piled. Some 100 children, on an average, attend the classes through the season, about half from families of Summer visitors. More than 2,600 adults visited the house last year.

## More Demanding

More demanding, along planning lines, than his well-established university curriculum, Dr. Betts finds his present vacation occupation also involves more physical exertion than Summer school teaching.

"This is the hardest work I've ever done," he said, smiling. He said one of his jobs is to arrange an attractive series of special events by persuading interesting persons to give their services, free, as lecturers, exhibitors or whatnot. He and his assistants,

also, have to range the island on collecting trips.

Some 60 different species of wildflowers graced the public rooms of Hinchman House when The Standard-Times reporter called there. They came from moor, bog and shore. All were fresh. All were tastefully arranged. A display of this kind is maintained all season.

Two salt water aquariums in one of the rooms contained a fascinating assortment of small fish, hermit crabs and the like. The water is frequently renewed from the sea. Specimens are replaced as they give up their little lives.

A terrarium was most popular stocked with growing sundews—carnivorous plants—which are among the most popular exhibits of the center.

Keeping the wildflower vases and the terrarium filled and renewing the water in the aquariums is a job that calls for frequent expeditions by Dr. Betts and his assistants. With Miss M. Ethel Hill, who has charge of children's classes and field trips, and Mrs. Betts, general helper, he goes seining at the beaches, wading into ponds, and wildflower gathering everywhere.

1955

## Hinchman House Closes For Season

The Lydia S. Hinchman House closed for the season Wednesday, having presented during the Summer six Friday evening lectures, two art exhibits, nature classes for children and two field courses for Island bird study.

Housing the Maria Mitchell Association's Natural Science Department, the Hinchman House had as its staff Dr. and Mrs. Edwin M. Betts of the University of Virginia, Miss Ethel Hill of the faculty of John Marshall High School in Richmond, Va. and Miss Elizabeth King of the Greensboro College for Women of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, N. C.

The six lectures were given by Mrs. C. L. Sibley, Raymond Wood, Andrew Starrett, Mrs. L. O. Anderson, Walter Boyd Jr. and Miss Mary Turlay Robinson. Art exhibits were "The Magic of Nature in Art" featuring Nantucket artists and "Birds of Charleston, S. C. and the Atlantic Coast" by Mr. Edward von Seibold Dingle of Charleston. Mrs. Clinton A. Andrews conducted the bird field courses and the children's nature classes were taught by Miss Hill and Miss King and saw 126 youngsters attending.

During the season the Natural Science Department exhibited arrangements of wild flowers, shells found on beaches, mounted birds, salt water aquaria with marine flora and fauna and various other exhibits relative to Nantucket.

1955



## Miss Grace Wyatt, Biologist, Dies

Miss Grace Wyatt, of Easley, S. C., former director of the Natural Science department of the Maria Mitchell Association, died recently. She was 60.

Word of her death was received this week by Margaret Harwood, director of the Maria Mitchell observatory from a sister, Miss Nellie Wyatt, also of Easley, S. C.

Miss Wyatt was for 20 years, between 1929 and 1949, connected with the Natural Science department. In the Summers of 1929, 1930 and 1932, she was assistant to Mrs. Alice Albertson Shurrocks, and from 1933 until she resigned in 1950 was the department's director.

She was born November 30, 1894 in Easley, S. C., the youngest of the eight children of Andrew Grigsby and Eveline Lenhardt Wyatt. She attended the public schools of Easley and graduated from Chicora College in 1915.

After teaching in the rural

schools of Easley for ten years, Miss Wyatt assisted in the biology department of George Peabody College, Nashville, Tenn. She received a B.S. from Peabody in 1926 and an M.A. in 1927. In 1932 she attended Duke University.

She taught in the State Teachers College at Murray, Ky. from 1927 to 1932, and since 1940 had been assistant professor of biology in the Murray State College. She taught in Shorter College, Rome, Georgia from 1934 to 1939.

Miss Wyatt resigned from the work here because of ill health. After treatment she was able to continue to carry a full teaching schedule at Murray, where she had her home. Her death after a brief illness comes as a surprise and shock because in recent letters she wrote of herself as well and entirely recovered.

Surviving are in addition to Miss Nellie Wyatt, three sisters and two brothers: Mrs. Pearl Robertson, Miss Sophia Wyatt, and A. Frank Wyatt, of Easley; Miss Mary T. Wyatt, of Walhalla, S. C. and Garrison Wyatt, of Greenville, S. C.

## Nature Classes End with Party On Hinchman House Lawn.

Six weeks of Nature Classes for children, whose ages ranged from 7 to 14 years, terminated at The Hinchman House, Saturday afternoon, August 10th. Work all finished, the children celebrated with a party on the lawn. An interesting and exciting note was added by the various costumes which the children wore. Among the crowd were a young pirate with a black patch over one eye, several bums with possessions tied in handkerchiefs at the end of sticks, a young ballerina, an insect, a young Indian girl, and many others, all of which added color to the grey afternoon. Judged the most original was a little lady dressed as a bowl of salad; the most beautiful the ballerina; and the most unusual the young pirate.

The children participated in various games and contests. A quiz program tested the knowledge gained in the classroom and on the walks during the summer. Eight children selected from the different groups formed a panel. If the members of the panel could not answer the questions asked them, the audience was given a chance to do so. If answered correctly, the reward was a lollipop.

A group project was a chart, showing the succession of bloom in flowering plants during the summer. Prizes were awarded for the best booklets and best insect collection, and to the winners of the various contests. After the games and contests, favors, and merit badges were passed out, and the party ended with ice cream for everyone.

Miss Martha Duke, who teaches biology at Lane High School in Charlottesville, Va., had charge of the classes. She was assisted by Miss Maida Weston from Bryn Mawr, Pa.

The following were members of the Nature Classes of the Natural Science Dept., Maria Mitchell Association.

7- and 8-year-old group: Dennis Adair, Nancy Ayotte, Linda Blackwood, Arlene Briard, Tina Broer, Alan Carr, Gillen Clements, Harold Collins, Justin Comstock, Jock Conley, Barbara Curtis, Daniel Dunham, Susan Elmer, Alexander Elmslie, Peter Fox, Charlotte Gardner, Leslie Johnston, Frances Jamieson, Phillips Johnson, Patty Killen, Debbie Killen, Mary Kornblee, Linda Lamb, Phoebe Lees, Vicky Lillierapp, Griselda Lyman, Deborah Newhouse, Elliot Norton, Dennis O'Grady, David Ryder, Michael Sivik, Craig Spear, Terry Sylvia, David Worth, James Worth, Heather Young, Willow Young.

9 and 10 year group: Frederick Barker, Charles Barnes, Bruce Bartlett, Bruce Bouton, Debbie Broer, Charles Chambers, Walter Iles, Michael Frensey, Anne Gilbreth, William Grieder, Sandra Holdgate, Peter Johnston, Julia Ann Keating, Susie Ann Keating, Elizabeth Kilvert, Liz Kornblee, Jeffery Marks, Elizabeth Ann Murray, Martin Nelson, Nancy Nelson, Gerry Newhouse, Nancy Newhouse, Charles Norton, Dana Perkins, Evert Polak, Alex Preston, Lynne Proctor, James Quigley, Richard Ray, Shepherd Spear, Suzanne Spencer, Andrew Stevenson, Sandy Stevenson, Geraldine Strojny, George Townsend, Charity Vanderbilt, Dale Waine, Jessica Young, Paula Zlotin.

Insect Study Class: Susan Chase, Judy Hamilton, Jocelyn Heye, Thory Heye, Karin Larsen, Pamela Lawrence, Jacqueline Mainhart, Mary Jean Nelson, Phyllis Orpin, Ruth Orpin, Cynthia Perkins, Lee Ann Perry, Florence Renaud, Marie Stackpole, Sheila Sylvia, Grant Trauth, Susan Tucker, Jenifer Weedon, Barry Zlotin.  
Plant Study Class: Betsy Barnes, Brad Butman, Marcia Butman, Patricia Nelson, Uli Plum, Carl Reith, Holly Trauth.

## Hinchman House Closes Friday, August 30.

The Lydia Hinchman House, 7 Milk Street, the home of the Natural Science Department of the Maria Mitchell Association, will close the season at 5 o'clock on Friday, August 30.

During the season many visitors came to see the wild flowers, birds, shells and salt water aquaria. The aquaria have from time to time held many things of interest. Among other things there have been living coral polyps, sea squirts, bryozoa, tube worms, star fish, sea urchins, sea anemones, various types of barnacles, quahogs, scallops, oysters, hippas and an assortment of fish.

Seven Friday evening lectures were given by: Mr. John Clark, Dr. Marie Berger and Mrs. J. Birdsall Calkins, Dr. William A. Hance, Dr. Josephine Bridgman, Mr. Jan Juta, and Mr. R. Newton Mayall. After each lecture, open house was held at the Hinchman House. Many members of the audience came for a cup of punch and a chat with friends and the lecturer.

The bird walks, sponsored by the department and conducted by Mrs. Clinton Andrews, were well attended. Unusual birds were seen by some for the first time.

As usual the Nature Classes were popular with the younger set. One hundred and seven were enrolled. Of these 62 were Nantucket children, the others being summer visitors. In the plant and insect study groups, Girl Scouts had an opportunity to earn merit badges.

Due to the illness of Dr. Edwin M. Betts, director for the past five summers, Miss Ethel Hill, his assistant, acted as director. Her staff consisted of Miss Martha Duke of Charlottesville, Virginia and Misses Frances and Maida Weston of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.

The many friends of Dr. Betts will be glad to learn that he is slowly recovering.

## Grace Wyatt, 1894-1954.

Word has just come of the death of Miss Grace Wyatt, who for 20 years, between 1929 and 1949, was connected with the Natural Science Department of the Maria Mitchell Association.

In the summer of 1929, 1930, and 1932 Miss Wyatt was assistant to Mrs. Alice Albertson Shurrocks and from 1933 until she resigned in 1950 she was Director of Natural Science.

Grace Wyatt was born November 30, 1894 in Easley, S. C., the youngest of the eight children of Andrew and Eveline Lenhardt Wyatt. She attended the public schools of Easley and graduated from Chicora College in 1915. After teaching in the rural schools of Easley for 10 years, Miss Wyatt assisted in the Biology Department of George Peabody College, Nashville, Tenn. She received the degree of B. S. from Peabody in 1926 and of M. A. in 1927. Later, in 1932-33, she studied at Duke University. She taught in the State Teachers College at Murray, Kentucky, from 1927 to 1932, and since 1940 she has been Assistant Professor of Biology in the Murray State College. She taught in Shorter College, Rome, Ga., from 1934 to 1939, inclusive.

Miss Wyatt resigned from the work here because of ill health. After treatment she was able to continue to carry a full teaching schedule at Murray, where she had her home. Her death after a brief illness comes as a surprise and shock because in recent letters she wrote of herself as well and entirely recovered.

The letter reporting her death was written by her sister, Miss Nellie Wyatt of 303 South First Street, Easley, S. C. Surviving also are three sisters and two brothers: Mrs. Pearl Robertson, Miss Sophia Wyatt, and A. Frank Wyatt of Easley; Miss Mary T. Wyatt of Walhalla, S. C., and Garrison Wyatt of Greenville, S. C.

Margaret Harwood.



## Fall Leads To Death Of Dr. E. M. Betts

Dr. Edwin Morris Betts, retired biology professor at the University of Virginia and former director of the Natural Science Department of the Maria Mitchell Association, died Saturday in Charlottesville, Va. of a cerebral hemorrhage several hours after he sustained a fractured skull in a fall on the steps of the University's Alderman Library. He was 66.

Dr. Betts, an authority on the gardening and farming practices of Thomas Jefferson, served as Maria Mitchell Association science director here for five years during the Summer months of 1951-56.

A native of Raleigh, N. C., Dr. Betts studied music at Durham Conservatory but turned to botany at Elon College in Graham, N. C. For 31 years he was a member of the faculty of the University of Virginia where he received his Master's degree in 1925 and a Doctorate in 1927. He was named assistant professor in 1927, associate professor in 1946 and full professor in 1950.

Dr. Betts' interest in Jefferson started with the study of trees Jefferson brought from abroad and planted at the University and his home, Monticello. It led to his appointment to the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation committee for the restoration of Monticello gardens following plans Jefferson made while President.

His study disclosed that much of the planting was done in 1807, the year Aaron Burr was tried for treason. The American Philosophical Society sponsored publication of Dr. Betts' "Jefferson Garden Book" in 1938 and it won him the University's Phi Beta Kappa prize. He was co-author of "Jefferson's Flower Garden at Monticello" in 1941. In 1953 through a Guggenheim Foundation grant Dr. Betts took time from his teaching to edit "Jefferson's Farm Book", published by the Society. Illness prevented Mr. Betts from completing the editing of Jefferson's letters to his daughters and their children under a recent Guggenheim grant. Much of the restoration planting at the University, according to Jefferson's plan was directed by Dr. Betts and carried out by the Garden Club of Virginia.

Dr. Betts was a member of the Sigma Xi and national and regional scientific and biological societies. He was organist for many years at the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Charlottesville.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Mary Hall Stryker Betts, whom he married in 1928; a son Edwin M. Betts Jr. of Petersburg, Va.; a daughter, Mrs. Hunter C. Lang, also of Petersburg; and two grandchildren.

Services were held at Westminster Presbyterian Church Monday. Burial was in University Cemetery.

Oct. 13, 1958

## Dr. Edwin M. Betts

Dr. Edwin Morris Betts, aged 65 years, director of the Natural Science Department of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association from 1951-1955, died on Saturday, September 27, in Charlottesville, Va. Dr. Betts had been in ill health for several years and had suffered a fractured skull last fall. He died from a cerebral hemorrhage.

Dr. Betts was an authority on Thomas Jefferson as a gardener and farmer. He was the author of "Jefferson's Garden Book," published by the American Philosophical Society, which won the University of Virginia's Phi Beta Kappa prize and which was one of the 10 best non-fiction books in 1944. Previously he had written "Jefferson's Flower Garden at Monticello" with Mrs. W. Allan Perkins, which was published in 1941, and, afterwards edited "Jefferson's Farm Book," which was published in 1953, also by the American Philosophical Society.

The work on "Jefferson's Farm Book" was done by Dr. Betts under a Guggenheim Foundation grant, which enabled him to take time from his duties at the University of Virginia, where he was professor of biology. Until his health forced him to stop, Dr. Betts was working, under another Guggenheim grant, on the editing of Jefferson's letters to his daughters.

Dr. Betts was born in Raleigh, N. C., on November 2, 1892, the son of William C. and Mary Williams Betts. He studied music at Durham Conservatory and became head of the music department at Elon College. It was while he was teaching at Elon that he became interested in botany, receiving a Master's Degree there in 1924. He received his Doctorate at the University of Virginia in 1927. He was a member of the faculty there for 31 years, becoming assistant professor in 1946; a full professor in 1950.

He first became interested in Thomas Jefferson as a horticulturist with his study of trees which Jefferson had brought from abroad for planting on the University grounds and at Monticello. He was a member of the committee of the Jefferson Memorial Foundation for the restoration of gardens at Monticello according to plans which Jefferson had made while he was president of the United States. This work was carried out by the Garden Club of Virginia.

Dr. Betts was formerly organist in four churches in Charlottesville: First Methodist, Christ Episcopal, St. Paul's Memorial (Episcopal), and Westminster Presbyterian. He was a member of Raven Society at the University of Virginia, Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, an honorary scientific society, the Virginia Academy of Sciences, and the Botanical Society of America.

In 1928 Dr. Betts married the former Miss Mary Hall Stryker, of Great Bridge, Va., who survives him. He is also survived by a son, Edwin M. Betts, Jr., and a daughter, Mrs. Hunter C. Lang, both of Petersburg, Va., and by two grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville Monday afternoon, September 29. Interment was at University Cemetery.

Oct. 15, 1958

## Dr. and Mrs. H. H. Johnson Directors at Hinchman House

The Hinchman House of the Maria Mitchell Association has a new look. It has become truly a museum of natural history. The permanent exhibits have been rearranged and labeled in a manner both pleasing to the eye and easy to understand. An average of 50 flowers and plants will be on display and identified throughout the summer.

The persons responsible for the bright new appearance are Dr. and Mrs. H. Herbert Johnson, the new directors of the natural history branch of the Maria Mitchell Association. Dr. Johnson is professor of biology and pre-medical adviser at the College of the City of New York and, strangely enough, also director of the National Bank of Palisades Park. Mrs. Johnson is the director of Bergen Community Museum which she organized as the first Arts-Science Museum in that area in 1956.

Both Dr. and Mrs. Johnson have had exciting and colorful careers in biology. Dr. Johnson spent a year and a half as guest instructor to Soochow University in China. There he taught laboratory assistants methods of collecting and preserving their own specimens rather than importing more expensive ones. This was necessary to adjust the American text books which were being used at the university, for while China has its equivalent animals, they often are quite different in some respect. For instance, Chinese earthworms look about the same as American worms, but they are often a yard long and as thick as a man's finger.

Dr. Johnson's work at this time was halted by the Sino-Japanese Wars. At the same time that Dr. Johnson was at work in China, Mrs. Johnson was teaching comparative anatomy in New York. Later both worked at the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole. Mrs. Johnson's work was concentrated in marine botany.

As one can see from the beautiful water colors on exhibit beside the real flowers and the careful arrangement of the flowers and specimens at the Hinchman House, both Dr. and Mrs. Johnson are very artistically inclined. Dr. Johnson has illustrated the recently published "Invertebrate Zoology," a college text by the late Dr. Victor Schechter. Mrs. Johnson has to her credit "Adventures with Living Things," a high school text by Krober and Wolff and "Angina Pectoris," by Dr. H. R. Miller. These are only a few examples of the biological and medical books for which they have done drawings and photography.

Mrs. Johnson was Girl Scout Commissioner in their home town of Leonia, N. J., and Dr. Johnson an adviser on Boy Scout merit badges, and both are eager to be of help to these programs through the classes which will be held this summer.

Besides all their other talents, the Johnsons are grandparents too! Their son Frank is married to Anne Morgan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Stokeley Morgan of Martin's Lane, and the young couple are presently on tour in Europe with the Yale Concert Band. Their daughter Jacqueline and her husband Dr. Donald Horrath, a professor at the University of West Virginia, are planning to visit the island in August with their children Christopher and Shelley-Lynn.

Thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Johnson, Nantucket will have a finer and more complete science museum than ever before. In conjunction with the museum will be a series of lectures at 8 p.m. on Fridays in the Scientific Library on Vestal Street. The first of these, on July 10, will be "Nantucket Moods," by Miss Hannah Monaghan. Her talk will be illustrated with Kodachrome slides which Dr. Johnson has described as "outstandingly beautiful."

Mrs. Johnson says the lectures will be an "exciting and well-balanced series which should do credit to the Maria Mitchell Association."

June 26, 1959

## Natural Science Museum Opens

Dr. Herbert H. Johnson has opened the Museum of Natural Science, formerly known as Hinchman House, with a coordinated display of living Nantucket wild flowers and ten water colors illustrating them.

The arrangement was done by Dr. and Mrs. Johnson who are in their first season in charge of the Museum.

Dr. Johnson painted the canvases especially for the Museum opening last Thursday.

Fifty different species of wild flowers were gathered by the Johnsons on the Island within a week, despite the cold and wet season. Most of the fragile plants are rooted in soil, and the few cuttings are replaced regularly.

The Museum, which is noted for its aquaria of salt water life and wild flower exhibits, is open weekdays from 10 to 12 and 2 to 5.

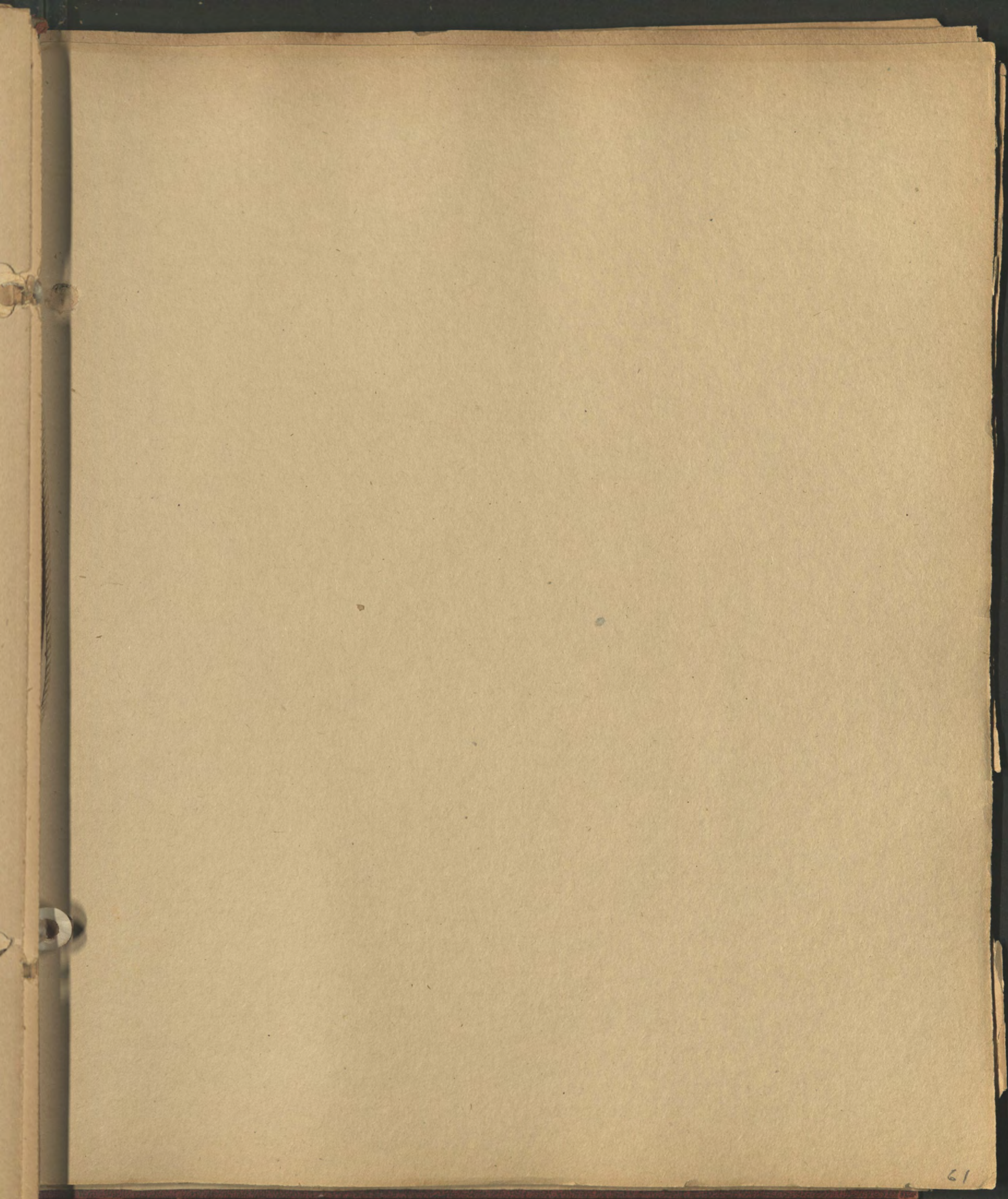
During the Winter Dr. Johnson teaches biology at the College of the City of New York and Mrs. Johnson is head of the Bergen County Museum in Bergen, N.J. They live in Leonia, N.J.

June 26, 1959















# Mitchell Family

For the Inquirer and Mirror.  
Mr. Editor:

Memorial services for the late William Forster Mitchell were held at the York Street Baptist Church, Sunday evening, August 14. These services were held at the suggestion and under the auspices of a number of ladies who felt that the life-work of the deceased in helping to elevate and to educate the late emancipated slaves, should be commemorated in his native town. There was a large audience in attendance, and it was an unusually interesting occasion. Reserved seats in front for the family and friends of the deceased were fully occupied. The arrangement of white water lilies, with other flowers, around the altar, was noticeable, and the air of neatness and order—of quiet refinement—which pervaded the little church made a very favorable impression upon strangers who were present, as well as upon our own people. After singing by the choir, Miss Beatrice Lake, organist, scripture reading by Mr. David B. Andrews, and prayer by Rev. L. S. Baker, the meeting was opened by the president, Mrs. S. B. Pompey. Mrs. Pompey's introductory speech deserves special mention on account of its appropriateness—its concise style—and its fine spirit of grateful remembrance of old anti-slavery workers, Nathaniel and Eliza Barney, Oliver C. Gardner and others, as well as of the late friend and benefactor of the race, William Forster Mitchell.

A beautiful solo was sung by Miss Alston, of Boston, which was followed by remarks by Rev. Louise S. Baker. Mrs. L. M. Mitchell read a letter from Mr. Balderston, the present superintendent of Bethany Mission, Philadelphia. This mission, which Mr. W. F. Mitchell himself established in 1856 for the uplifting of the colored people, in an old carpenter's shop, is now conducted on a grand scale in a large brick building. A quartette was finely rendered by Misses Alston, Lake, Mrs. Edgar Wilkes and Wilson Alston. An original poem (which appears below) accompanied by appropriate remarks, was read by Matthew Barney:

A good man of our Israel hath passed on  
To the far beyond—the unseen way,  
And to that better higher life hath gone  
The redeemed soul's eternal day.

Great was his love to brother man;  
In heart and soul he felt the woe  
That through the drink cursed life began,  
And oft home's love did overthrow.

Aye, slavery's curse he knew and saw,  
Amid its home, in southern lands,  
Outraging justice, sacred law,  
And Heaven's own Divine commands.

Yes, labor's worn and wearied powers,  
Of mind or body had his care,  
And many sympathizing hours  
His christian spirit oft did share.

An earnest, warm and christian heart  
Did all his daily walk attest,  
Performing oft the preacher's part,  
Our Saviour's love to all confessed.

He loved Friends' silent introversion,  
When gathered in their house of prayer,  
Was witness of some hearts conversion,  
That felt our Saviour's presence there.

Life here is ended by the soul's expansion,  
The spirit freed of all its clogging cares,  
Soars upward to its eternal mansion,  
And in our Father's home its glory shares.

He hath passed unto that joyous meeting,  
Given by our Father in his gracious love;  
He to his children gives a hallowed greeting,  
An eternal welcome to His home above.

The principal address of the evening was made by the pastor, Rev. William Jackson. Mr. Jackson is noted as having been the chaplain of a regiment from Massachusetts, appointed by Gov. Andrew, in the war of the rebellion. Professor Oswald, of Worcester, contributed sweet music on the violin, which was highly appreciated. During the evening remarks were made by Mr. Henry Woods, of Lynn, and others. The president had appropriately alluded to facts in the life of Mr. Mitchell as illustrative of his work. She said in 1883 he established the Industrial Department of Howard University, D. C., and was appointed its

superintendent. During the war, as superintendent of schools, he visited Alabama and Tennessee, which had been the hot-bed of slavery, having forty teachers under his charge. There were many other interesting facts and incidents in her memory which she would like to give would time permit.

The president reported that she would add one only as given by himself, when visiting Great Britain. There was a meeting called by Lord Little at Banbury, England, to listen to a plea for the freedman of America by William Forster Mitchell, which came very near miscarriage by the lateness of the speaker. Mr. Mitchell told the story thus:

"I started in good season for Banbury, but I got out at the wrong station, and discovered to my dismay that the place of meeting was some miles further on and the time pretty nearly up. After much trouble I succeeded in getting a miserable saddle horse, and I arrived at the proper place to find a large audience in a very impatient mood—already prejudiced. This embarrassed me very much, and when I went up into the desk I felt that I was lost. I began awkwardly to apologize. I said 'I am very sorry to be late; I lost my way; or, rather, I got out at the wrong station.' And I didn't know what to do till I remembered my mother's earliest injunction, 'Ride a cock horse to Banbury Cross.' As I said this the whole audience burst into wild applause. I rose from my humble confusion to a great triumph. After the meeting was over many persons came to me to ascertain if my opening was 'put up,' and others to ask if their nursery rhymes were really sung by mothers to babies on the other side of the world."

The deceased continued his interest in the advancement of the colored people during a long illness—and until absolutely unable to go out, often spoke in the same little church where memorial services were held in affectionate remembrance of his good work and work.

A. G.

For the Inquirer and Mirror.

MITCHELL.—The life of William Forster Mitchell, who recently passed from us into the life beyond, is a record of years spent in lifting people to a higher plane. His whole work was to show the darkened where the light shone, to lead the discouraged to the hills of hope, and to point out the straight path of duty to the erring. Such a life never ceases. We may say that he is dead; that the form we knew and loved, because it belonged to him, has gone from among us; but the forces he set in motion among others and the lessons which a long and useful life taught, are as living and active today as if his bodily presence continued. Nantucket loses by his death one of its sons whom it will delight to honor—not for the worldly praise which he gained, the wealth he acquired, or the fame which he achieved, but because of the hearts which he comforted and the homes which were made bright by his ministrations.

William Forster Mitchell was the third son of William Mitchell, and was born at Nantucket in August, 1825. He was from early manhood deeply interested in the colored people, and active in the plans devised for their emancipation. He was among the first to offer his services after they were freed, and worked untiringly in Tennessee and Alabama for the uplifting of the newly-liberated race. Later, he went to England to present the cause of the freed people among the English Quakers, and raised a large sum of money, which was used to establish schools.

The last active years of his life were spent at Howard University, in Washington, instituting an industrial department for the development of trades and industries among the colored people. He did not give up his task of helping them to help themselves until he was absolutely unfit for any active work, and he never lost his interest in their welfare, or his belief in their capabilities.

After a long and painful illness, borne with uncomplaining patience, he is at rest; but there are many aside from his family, whose faith is stronger, whose hopes are more firmly fixed, and whose love for all that is worthy and of good report is more intense from the ministrations of him who has gone from us in one sense, but who lives with us in the aspirations he implanted.

## OBITUARY.

Prof. Henry Mitchell, of Boston, died in the Dunmore hospital, New York city, Monday morning, from heart failure. For some time past Professor Mitchell has been in the service of the U. S. government survey. He is the father of Mrs. John F. Havemeyer, of 262 West 94th street, New York city.

Henry Mitchell was born in Nantucket, September 16, 1830, the son of William Mitchell, an astronomer. He was a brother of the late Maria Mitchell, celebrated professor of astronomy at Vassar college, and who was the first woman elected to the American academy of arts and sciences. His early training was secured in private schools, and in 1867 he received from Harvard the degree of A. M.

In 1859 he was appointed an assistant to the commissioners on harbor encroachments of New York. Later he became consulting engineer to the U. S. commission on Boston harbor, subsequently a member of the commission and afterward advisory council to the board of harbor commissioners of Boston. The latter position he occupied at the time of his death.

Professor Mitchell occupied for a time a professorship in the American Institute of Technology, and was a member of the U. S. advisory councils on the harbors of Portland, Me., Providence, R. I., Norfolk, Va., and Portsmouth, and of Philadelphia.

In 1874 Professor Mitchell was appointed by President Grant to represent the coast and geodetic survey in the board of engineers for improvement of the mouth of the Mississippi river. Afterward he was made a member of the Mississippi river commission. He was a member of the National academy of sciences, a fellow of the American academy of sciences and a member of the American institute of civil engineers. Among his writings are articles on tides and tidal phenomena, river currents and other subjects connected with physical hydrology. His summer residence has been in Nantucket for a number of years.

Mary S. Mitchell, a life-long member of the Society of Friends, died after a very brief illness, Tuesday, at the homestead on Vestal street, in her 91st year. Deceased was the widow of Peleg Mitchell, and for many years has made Philadelphia her permanent home, residing with her eldest daughter. She annually came to Nantucket and had been here only a few weeks when the death summons came. The funeral took place on Thursday afternoon.

## In Memory.

MARY ANN ALBERTSON.

The gracious presence that was always a powerful factor in creating the atmosphere of the Maria Mitchell house has left us with memories that can never die.

Although she went from Nantucket when a young woman she always retained her love for the old home, and in her later years, when her own family cares were lessened, she was prompt to answer the call of the many friends of Maria Mitchell who wished to establish a memorial to the astronomer.

They found in Mary Albertson a perfect representative of their ideals. Following conscientiously the precepts of the Society of Friends, she was broad-minded and charitably interested in every good work, and the success of the Maria Mitchell Memorial largely depended upon her personality and influence.

That the work with which she has been so closely identified for years, may be continued in the same spirit of devotion to high standards that she has shown, is the fervent wish of all who loved her.

G.

## Mrs. Phebe M. Kendall Dead.

Mrs. Phebe Mitchell Kendall, the wife of Joshua Kendall, died yesterday in Belmont, at the age of seventy-nine years. Mr. and Mrs. Kendall have lived for many years in Appian Way, Cambridge, but on account of the deceased woman's impaired health she had recently gone to a sanatorium in Belmont. Mr. Kendall is known in Cambridge as the head of one of the earliest private schools for boys in that city. Mrs. Kendall also was greatly interested in school matters and served from 1880 until 1894 on the Cambridge School Committee; there she was a member of many important sub-committees, and at the time of her resignation resolutions were adopted which expressed much appreciation of her long and faithful term on the committee. Mrs. Kendall was the daughter of Hon. William Mitchell and Lydia Coleman Mitchell of Nantucket. Besides her husband, she leaves one son, who is a member of the firm of McKim, Mead & White of New York.—Boston Transcript, 5th.

Prof. Henry Mitchell, who has for thirty-five years been connected with the U. S. Coast Survey, contemplates retiring from the service, in which he has done much valuable work.

July 2, 1892

July 6, 1902

July 12, 1902 (?)

Aug 23, 1914

June 15, 1907

1888



# Death of Mrs. La Boiteaux.

Mrs. Mary Hinchman La Boiteaux, of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, and Nantucket, passed away after a few hours' illness in Bryn Mawr on March 18, 1946, in her seventy-third year. She was the daughter of Charles Shoemaker Hinchman, of Philadelphia, and Lydia Swain Mitchell, a native of Nantucket, and the widow of Isaac La Boiteaux, of Cincinnati and Philadelphia.

Mrs. La Boiteaux is survived by her daughter, Mrs. Thomas E. Drake, and eight grandchildren; by two sisters, Miss Margaretta S. Hinchman, of Philadelphia, and Miss Anne Hinchman, of New York City; and by a brother, Walter S. Hinchman, of Milton, Massachusetts.

Born in Philadelphia, July 25, 1873, and educated at private schools, Wellesley College, and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Mrs. La Boiteaux devoted much of her time to painting and horticulture, although her interests extended to many fields.

The names of the societies to which she belonged testified to this breadth of interest. They included the Colonial Dames of America, the Archaeological Institute, Friends' Historical Association, the Nantucket Historical Association, the American Historical Association, the Philadelphia Art Alliance, Print Club, Fellowship of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, etc.

Her paintings, particularly her water colors of flowers and landscapes, were exhibited frequently both on Nantucket and on the mainland. She won, among other awards, the 1934 Philadelphia Water Color Prize at the 33rd annual exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

As a horticulturist and gardener, Mrs. La Boiteaux was a member of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, and served on the National Horticultural Committee of the Garden Club of America; she was chairman for many years of her own Philadelphia club, The Gardeners.

She took great delight in the wild-flowers and gardens of Nantucket, where she has been a frequent visitor and a regular summer resident during the past decade. One of her particular island interests was the Maria Mitchell Association, of which she was a life member and vice president.

Aug 13, 1946

One of the two ladies elected members of the Cambridge, Mass., school committee is Mrs. Phebe M. Kendall, a sister to Prof. Maria Mitchell, of Vassar College. Mrs. Kendall was formerly a teacher in one of the Providence schools, and has for many years assisted her husband in his work of preparing young men for Harvard College. She is eminently qualified to discharge her new duties by her experience as an educator and a care-taker of developing bodies and minds in home life, and by her genial manners and enthusiasm in all good works. Providence Journal.

Aug 13, 1879

DEATH OF HON. WILLIAM MITCHELL.—We are called upon to record the decease of our former townsman, Hon. William Mitchell, who died at Vassar College Observatory, Poughkeepsie, on the 19th inst., aged 77 years. He was a native and until within a few years past, a resident of this town, and filled the office of Cashier of the Pacific Bank for about a quarter of a century. He represented Nantucket in the Legislature, and was once a member of the Executive Council. He was also for many years one of the Overseers of Harvard University, and Chairman of the Committee on the Observatory. It is but a small tribute to his character to say that he was a most estimable citizen, and filled every responsible position to which he was called with credit and fidelity.

The following notice, which appears in the Poughkeepsie Eagle, is a beautiful tribute in recognition of Mr. Mitchell's personal virtues and distinguished attainments:

OBITUARY.—Mr. William Mitchell, father of Miss Maria Mitchell, died at Vassar College Observatory yesterday at sunset, (April 19,) at the age of 77. Mr. Mitchell had during his life held many eminent positions and places of trust in the State of Massachusetts where he had resided continuously up to the time of his removal with his daughter to this city, at the opening of the College. He has been a resident here long enough to be known and loved as one of the purest spirits ever classed among men. Seventy-seven years among men and yet absolutely unstained. He passed away with the sun.

Apr. 24, 1869

We are indebted to one of the professors at Vassar College for the following touching account of the removal of the remains of the late Hon. William Mitchell from that Institution, which we know will be of interest to our readers:

"At noon on Tuesday, April 20th, the remains of our honored and beloved Mr. Mitchell were removed from the Observatory. It is impossible to express the reverence and love that all connected with the College, in whatever capacity, felt for him. He had always a word of cheer, or encouragement, or appreciation, or affectionate sympathy for all. He is as closely identified with the College, as its active officers are. While doing is their mission, being here was his, and how sweetly he fulfilled it, the hundreds of loving hearts that bless his memory, are the witnesses. When he went away from us at last, we bore him company to the college gates. The servants gathered about the college doors; the students walked in procession before the hearse; the members of Miss Mitchell's class attended on either side; the carriage occupied by the family was followed by the officers of the college, and when the students reached the broad avenue leading to the Lodge, they formed two lines and stood in silence while the hearse and its followers passed between. It was a silent testimony. We believe the deep feeling of the hour, could reach him in his Heavenly Home."

May 22, 1869

DWELLING HOUSE  
FOR SALE. The good commodious dwelling house, situated on Vestal Street, formerly known as the Isaac Mitchell House. The said house has recently been put in prime order, has a well of good water, and every convenience for a large family; will be sold at a bargain if applied for soon. Apply to M. CROSBY, JR., Comm'l Wharf. me31

1852

# Death of Joshua Kendall.

Joshua Kendall, long an educator and principal of a private school for boys, which he kept in Appian Way, Cambridge, from 1870 until 1905, died Tuesday at a private hospital in Somerville, at the age of eighty-five years. His home was in Cambridge.

Mr. Kendall was principal of Meadville Seminary, at Meadville, Pa., and later became the first principal of the first Rhode Island State Normal school, at Bristol, in that state.

Mr. Kendall married Phoebe Mitchell of Nantucket, a sister of the late Miss Maria Mitchell, the distinguished astronomer. He survived his wife, but leaves a son, William Mitchell Kendall, born in Jamaica Plain, but now a resident of New York city, where he is an architect and member of the firm of McKim, Mead & White. Mr. Kendall was a member of the Browning club.

Feb. 22, 1913

# IN MEMORIAM.

DIED, on Saturday last, of a lingering illness, Sally Barney, wife of Matthew Barney, in the 61st year of her age.

There are times when the stern visitor, Death, glides into the home sanctuary like a spirit of mercy—when it seems to lay its hand compassionately upon the suffering invalid, assuaging every pain; and, as a consolation to the bereaved hearts whose earth-bound affections must be severed, stamps upon the placid features and saintly forehead, during the transit from the seen to the Unseen, the seal of birth into a higher and happier existence, where the departed spirit can glow and expand in the light which shines behind the shadow of death.

While the deceased was young, the developing activities of her mind struggled with physical pain, from which she was seldom relieved. Long years of wasting sickness and suffering hid from the world remarkable qualities of mind and heart. In her there were combined rare sweetness, dignity, and urbanity of manner, with moral strength, firmness and unswerving integrity of character. All who were privileged to be brought within the sphere of her influence felt how broad-spread and potential that influence might have been, had not physical disability contracted it to the circle of her relatives and personal friends.

As daughter, sister, wife and mother, she was idolized. She was a daughter of the late Hon. William Mitchell, noted as an astronomer. She was connected with a large and distinguished family—brothers and sisters who have been living away from their native Isle, but who returned to make a parting visit to a sister for whom they entertained the most tender regard, when there were certain premonitions that the hour of her departure drew near. All delighted to repeat to her sick room. Gloom had no abiding place there. It was rendered cheery and attractive, not only by the tone—the charm of her general conversation—but enlivened by a quiet, subtle humor native to her, which rippled into speech, like the sparkling eddies of a lake swayed by the summer breeze. She possessed a very delicate perception of natural beauty and an intuitive, discriminating insight of human character. The ocean was to her a perpetual delight. Day by day she gazed from her windows upon its broad expanse. It seemed to minister to her aspiring soul as a symbol of the Infinite. She was a member of the Society of Friends, but the Catholicity of her religion embraced the entire human family.

That deep-souled lover of the beautiful has gone home to the source of all beauty; that earnest admirer of the noble, just and true in human character, to the Soul of all Truth. A life which leaves a record like hers will continue to be an inspiration. Very warm is the sympathy felt for her family and friends in their great bereavement—in the utter void her absence must create. They have the satisfaction to feel that she "has not left the world without a vestige." In unflinching wisdom and discretion, in unselfish affection and high-hearted fortitude, her life was made complete.

"Knowledge by suffering entereth, And life is perfected by Death."

A. G.

Apr. 1, 1876

# Death of Charles Neal Barney.

Charles Neal Barney, a long-time summer resident of Nantucket, died of a cerebral hemorrhage on Sunday, April 24, at his home at 15 Barclay Road, Scarsdale, N. Y. He was 73 years old.

Although not island-born, Charles Neal Barney was of Nantucket ancestry and was always deeply interested in the home of his forebears. Two years ago, at the annual meeting of the Nantucket Historical Association, he gave an address on a diary kept by his grandfather—Matthew Barney—which revealed a deep knowledge of the Nantucket of a century ago.

Born in Lynn, Mass., in 1876, Charles Neal Barney was the son of William Mitchell Barney, of Nantucket, and Mary Louisa (Neal) Barney. After attending the Lynn schools, he entered Tufts College, in Medford, Mass., graduating with an A. B. degree in 1896. Three years later he obtained a law degree from Boston University. In 1908, he received his Masters degree from Tufts College, and from 1909 to 1922, he was a trustee of that college.

He was vice-president, secretary, and general counsel of the Worthington Pump and Machinery Corporation, 2 Park ave., New York city, with which he had been associated since 1918.

Politically a Republican, Mr. Barney was Mayor of Lynn in 1906-07, a Presidential elector in 1908, and an unsuccessful candidate for United States Representative from Massachusetts in 1916. He was a former lecturer at Northeastern University Law School and was chairman of the legal advisory draft board at Lynn in the First World War.

A few years ago he purchased 41 Cliff Road as his summer home, where he enjoyed the summers with Mrs. Barney and their daughter, Elizabeth.

He was a member of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association, the Pacific Club, the Nantucket Historical Association, and a former member of the Nantucket Yacht Club. At the time of his death he was the President of the Maria Mitchell Association. The flag at the Pacific Club was lowered to half-staff in his memory during the first part of the week.

His other memberships included the Theta Delta Chi, Phi Beta Kappa, the Society of Mayflower Descendants, the Newcomen Society, the University Club and the Massachusetts, New York State and American Bar Associations.

His widow, Mrs. Maizie Blaikie Barney, and a daughter, Miss Elizabeth Barney, both of Scarsdale, survive.

Funeral services were conducted from the Hitchcock Memorial Church in Scarsdale on Wednesday. Interment was in Scarsdale.

1949

Sept 1, 1934



The study of the Nantucket tides has been a fundamental part of island life since the days of the first settlers. When Thomas Macy, Edward Starbuck and the first group of Englishmen set up their rude abodes on the northwest portion of Nantucket they recognized the sea as an equal source for food and sustenance as the land. It was natural that they should learn of the tides from the Indians, just as they learned the art of chasing and killing whales from the shore, and as they fitted out sloops for seeking the whales among the shoals, it became their business to learn something about the tides.

The first lessons of the character of the tidal currents were learned "the hard way." Numerous passages in open boats from the Vineyard to the west end of the island made it necessary to utilize the west or east tides to advantage. As years passed the fundamental characteristics of tidal drift became established pretty much as accepted fact. With the ever-growing commerce with Boston, Newport, New York and Philadelphia, a rough idea of tidal flows throughout the sounds and bays was established.

When Capt. Southack prepared a map of southeastern New England's coastal waters in 1720, he was putting into concrete form the gathering of his knowledge gleaned from various shipmasters. While there are not many references to tides in his crude map, there are indications that several fundamental principles were understood. That he knew little or nothing of Nantucket is evident from his drawing of the island on this map. [There is a very curious "cut" in the elbow of the Cape at Eastham, which Southack notes as the place through which he came in a small boat from Massachusetts Bay in order to reach the scene of the wreck of the pirate ship *Whidah* in 1684.]

The publication of Ben Franklin's charts of the Gulf Stream, which appeared in 1750, was the result of facts obtained from Capt. Timothy Folger, of Nantucket. Due to the fact that the American shipmasters made better time in their voyages to and from England than the British, the London merchants often discussed the difference in time at the coffee houses and taverns. Franklin's scientific mind was aroused, and it was "Cousin Timothy" of Nantucket who furnished him with the knowledge of the great ocean river known as the Gulf Stream.

Another Nantucketer with a keen inquiring mind, and a scientist in his own right, was Walter Folger, Jr. He made a study of tidal conditions all around the island, but with more of an idea of charting the many shoals off the south and east shores.

During the Revolutionary War, the British Navy had made a chart of Nantucket, showing some of the most dangerous shoals, especially laying out the channels through Nantucket bar. In 1790, Capt. Paul Pinkham, of Nantucket, had drawn a fairly accurate chart of Nantucket and many of the principal shoals surrounding it. Walter Folger's surveying of the Old South Shoal, Rose & Crown, Pochic and Bass ribs took place in the early 1820's, and it is significant that subsequent coast surveys located the Old South Shoal in the same position as Walter Folger had designated.

## Henry Mitchell's Study of Tides and Earliest Naval Map.

By Edouard A. Stackpole.

The first U. S. Coast Guard surveys were in the early 1840's, when Davis and McBlair shoals, among others of danger spots, were placed on the new charts of the time.

It was about this time that Prof. Henry Mitchell, son of William Mitchell, the Nantucket scientist and astronomer and brother of Prof. Maria Mitchell, who had gained world fame as the discoverer of a comet, began his work of studying the tides which swept the shores of his island home.

Entering the government service, Henry Mitchell soon became an authority on tides, ocean currents and other marine phenomena. Seventy-five years ago there was considerable agitation for a cut-through at the head of the harbor at the "Haulover," and many fishermen and local coastal pilots expressed themselves in favor of the plan. The determining factor in the proposal, insofar as the government engineers were concerned, was the report of Henry Mitchell.

In this report, aside from the big question of the "Haulover" cut-through, there was much detail concerning the tides. In view of the recent agitation for a breach through Coatue Beach at Chatham Bend, portions of the Mitchell report are most interesting. The significant portions are as follows:

"The island of Nantucket is, mainly, a heap of glacial drift. Except for a very remarkable bank of oyster shells which crops out from Sankoty Head, about sixty feet below the brow of the cliff, no ante-glacial deposit is found.

"Great Point, Coatue and the larger part of Smith's Point are modern formations, and composed, probably, of material torn by the waves from the seaward side of the island. In the midst of the town is a long bluff, where the drift deposit has been undermined by the sea, probably before the shelter offered by Great Point and Coatue existed.

"The Haulover, which it is proposed to cut through, connects the drift mound known as Coskata with the main body of the island, and separates the Upper Harbor from the ocean."

[The name Haulover signifies, as its name implies, a portage place for boats, probably dating from the times when the Indians hauled their canoes over the sand to fish for cod and haddock on the ocean side.]

Prof. Mitchell continued:

"This Haulover has nearly the same form and area upon the maps of Des Barres, 1776, William Mitchell, 1838, Coast Survey, 1846, and Dr. Ferdinand C. Ewer, 1869.

"The section (between Coskata and Wauwinet) is the mean of three lines of levels following depressions, from the harbor on the one side, to the ocean on the other. The distance from rear to front is unusually short, yet still I claim that the form is that of a sea-built dike.

"But, even if this barrier be, as Mr. Joseph B. Macy and others of Nantucket assume from their examinations, a remaining strip of the original drift, we might still expect

its exposed portion to wear the form impressed upon it by the sea; so that I did not give much weight to my own view, which is literally superficial as yet.

"In the natural formation of an opening through the 'littoral cordon' of the coast, the waves play only a preliminary part; it is the current which digs the channel. The over-leaping waves weaken the dike, but it is by filling the basin behind to overflowing that the breach is made wide and deep.

"In cases like Chatham, where the length of the exposed beach is in very great ratio to the area of the basin, the latter is very liable to overflow, and inlets are the frequent products of great storms.

"The Haulover beach, on the contrary, is so short from Coskata to Squam that it does not admit many overleaping seas, and therefore the basin within never perhaps swells to overflowing. The experiment proposed is, therefore, one which nature may never have tried."

[Twenty-four years after Prof. Mitchell wrote this, nature did try the experiment. On Dec. 15, 1896, during a terrific easterly, an opening was breached in the Haulover beach. In 1904, it was at its widest, estimated at 440 yds. The opening closed during a storm on Nov. 9, 1908, having been in existence twelve years.]

Prof. Mitchell then went into the matter of tides, and his valuable report stated:

"The distinguishing peculiarity of the district under examination (the Haulover) is its unparalleled tidal currents. There approach our coast from the ocean two oscillations of the tide, which meet or 'form their node' southward of Nantucket Island.

"From Great Point, Nantucket, all along the outer coast of America to the northward, high water occurs at or shortly after, the transit of the moon.... From Smith's Point, Nantucket, along the outer coast to the southward, high water occurs four or five hours earlier. 'South moon makes high water,' and 'southeast moon makes high water,' are the two rules respectively applied by sailors to the two divisions of the coast we have named.

"My very close observations, made in 1854, show that the nodal line intersects the shore line of Nantucket between the meridians of 70° 0 min. and 70° 05 min.; i. e., a short distance to the westward of the shoals. The two oscillations entering the Sound, the one by Gay Head and by Muskeget Channel, and the other by the Eastern Entrance, give very complicated tides between Tarpauline Cove and Tuckernuck. In the small tides of Holmes Hole (Vineyard Haven), Muskeget Channel and Weweeder (at Surfside) there are sometimes four high tides in one day, distinctly given by gauging."

From the action of the tide before and after the break-through at the Haulover fifty years ago, certain results were apparent. After the beach was breached there was a pronounced increase in the strength of the upper harbor currents—a natural happening—and following the close-up in 1908, the shellfishermen enjoyed good digging and dredging of clams, quahaugs and scallops in the upper har-

bor, due to the years of strong ebb and flow by the tides. But there was a determining factor: the tide at the outside of the harbor became high before that of the harbor, not by a matter of a few minutes but by an hour. According to Prof. Mitchell's data, the outside tide and the inside tide belonged to the same tidal system, the eastern, but the outside tide was many times governed by side-currents caused by an admixture with the western tidal system.

As regards the proposed opening at Chatham bend, such a project will be affected by only one tidal system, the eastern, and will have a much different result than those following the opening at the Haulover. This is due to the fact that the times of the ebb and flow will be different from those which affected the opening at the Haulover.

Prof. Mitchell noted that the rise and fall of the tide at Smith's Point was 2:24 feet (outside station); and at Great Point it was 3:44 feet; while at Brant Point it was 3.07 feet compared to 3.17 at the head of the harbor (inside). At 'Seonset he noted the rise and fall was 2.10 feet, while at Weweeder it was 1.50.

The most interesting phase of Mr. Mitchell's observations, however, has to do with the difference in water levels at the inside and outside (or ocean side) of the upper harbor basin. He wrote:

"The delay and the distortion of profile which the tide undergoes in its passage to the Upper Harbor, gives rise to a considerable contrast of elevation on the two sides of the Haulover—amounting to over one ft. at the time of the maximum difference, an hour after low water, and two hours after the high water of the Upper Harbor.

"From the best I can do with computations at stations so distant from the scene, I should say that from the time of high water (in the Upper Harbor), until within 2 hours and a half of low water, the surface of the Upper Harbor is above that of the ocean.

"For some little time before high water, the stream would be continuous through the narrows (off Pocomo) into the Upper Harbor, and out through any inlet (at the Haulover) to the sea. The reverse would be true at low water.

"The movement into the basin from outside will exceed in velocity that, which, six hours later, will obtain in the opposite direction; so that an interior accumulation of sand will be likely to occur, as well as a bar outside. The basin of the Upper Harbor is, however, deeper than any other part of the port and not, as yet, used for commercial purposes.

"The coastwise streams are strong at Siasconset and at Great Point, but off the Haulover the current is quite feeble. Capt. George W. Coffin, of Siasconset, made observations upon the currents at several points along the eastern shore of the island in 1855, when employed in my surveying party, and it is to his data that I have referred."

During the period of 12 years in which the Haulover opening was in existence, it gradually moved north from where it originally was cut through, near Wauwinet, so that at the time of its closing in November, 1908, it was fully a mile from its first break-through.

Among the several scientists who had studied the phenomenon was the late William F. Jones, who as a boy grew up in Wauwinet. Mr. Jones was keenly interested in the various changes affecting the shore-line, and the tidal conditions, and in April—



some six months before the opening closed—he predicted that such an unexpected event would occur “within a few months.”

[A most interesting treatise on the shore-line and other features of Nantucket harbor, which was written by the late William F. Jones is in the possession of the Historical Association for publication.]

When the news of the Haulover's opening having ended reached Mr. Jones, who was then at the University of California, he wrote that his prediction of this event was a perfectly logical deduction, as the movement of the sand was northwesterly, and the arrival of the opening's northern end at the clay bench at Coskata made it certain that it would close.

Controversy has brought the subject of a man-made opening at the Haulover before the public on several occasions. Some ten years ago, there was a strong movement afoot to seek Federal aid for such a project, and considerable debate raged for several months. The scheme never materialized.

At the last town meeting an article in the warrant called for an opening through Coatue at Chatham Bend in order to create a greater circulation of water in the Upper Harbor and thus increase the propagation of the shellfish in the entire area.

The matter was referred to a committee which has reported, within recent weeks, that the majority of fishermen favor the idea. There are several citizens, however, who oppose the idea because of its cost and the doubt as to how long such an opening would exist.

#### British Naval Map of Nantucket Was Prepared 170 Years Ago.

Prof. Henry Mitchell's reference to Des Barres map of Nantucket brings up one of the least-known items in the notable list of Nantucketiana. Old maps showing the approximate position of Nantucket in relation to the coast and adjacent islands have existed from the time of the early Dutch exploration. The name of the island has been designated in as many different ways as the shape given by these vague cartographers, ranging from “Nantiok” to “Nauticon.”

An example of fantasy in map-making may be observed in examination of Capt. Southack's drawing of the island, while De Crèvecoeur's map accompanying his “Letters From An American Farmer” shows little knowledge of the outline or shore-line of Nantucket.

The Des Barres map was the first to have a look of authenticity. It was the work of a Lieut. Knight, of the British Navy, in 1776, and was published by I. F. W. Des Barres in 1781, for the Admiralty.

Lieut. Knight and his men must have been assisted by local pilots, as he obtained the important channels through the Bar into the harbor. The surrounding waters and shoals were charted, and the outline of the island and general topography reveal more than a casual knowledge of this place.

The names given on the map are interesting as they were spelled as pronounced by the islanders interviewed. For instance, “Coskata” is spelled *Coskeity*, “Coatue” was written *Coutu*, “Brant Point is *Brandt Point*, and “Sesachacha” is given as *Swesackechi*.

The island of Tuckernuck is designated *Tuckernuck*, and the wide expanse of Tuckernuck Shoal is broken up into various segments with the caption “Muskeget Shoals” and the description “sand shoals, 8 to 10 feet at low water.” There is no identification of Hedge Fence, Half Moon or Handkerchief shoals, which indicates Yankee pilots didn't tell all of which they were aware.

The rips at Great Point are duly charted, but Pochick Rip, off Sconset, is set down as *Polluck Rip*. The present Pollock Rip, of course, is to the north-northeast of the island, beyond Handkerchief, guarding the eastern entrance to Nantucket sound.

Some of the natural features of the island which have since been obliterated or changed by the forces of nature, are shown. Smith's Point then extended well to the west of Tuckernuck. The hospital buildings of Dr. Gelston are plainly shown on the tiny island known as Gravelly Isles, although they are not so named on this chart. On the southwest slopes of the Popsquatchet hills are the rope walks as well as the mills, and Lieut. Knight has marked the “Pest House Shore” at Shimmo.

All along the South Shore the ponds are shown in the valleys. The “Wigwam Ponds,” “Taupche,” Nobadeer, Weeweeder and *Miacomit* ponds are shown with only the latter named. At that time Hummock Pond had its north and south heads joined in one pond, called *Smooth Hummocks Pond*.

According to the map, the proper way to make a landing at Nantucket harbor was as follows:

“To sail into Nantucket harbor and carry the best water over the bar on which is 9 feet bring the lighthouse to bear S. S. E., then run for it giving Brandt Point a birth and haul in. The Buoy on the East flat seen in the day time.”

In approaching Tuckernuck bank, then marked as “Muskeget shoals,” the following notice was given:

“To avoid these shoals keep Cape Poge bearing to the Southward of West until you approach the South Point of the Horse Shoe Shoal, which is steep-too. The bearings of Tuckernuck Island, as you draw near it, will direct you. When Cape Poge bears West and Tuckernuck Island South you are in ye Narrows, and when you have brought the saddle of the Island to bear S. S. W., you may steer S. S. E., for Nantucket Harbor, or make long stretches either to the northward or southward, the Sound being clear of shoals.

At the present location of Cross Rip there is an arrow pointing southwest, with the words “Ebb Tide, 2 knots.” Just to the north of Hedge Fence is the warning: “Mast of a sunken ship which swings with ye tide.” The compass variation is noted as 6° 30' W.

Along the shore, from Sconset to Great Point Rip the chart-maker had written: “Channel for small craft, 13 feet at low water, very near shore.”

The dangerous rips off Great Point are carefully drawn, with the “Galls Rocks” off the beach also placed. The sailing directions for clearing the rips read:

“When to the eastward of this Rip bring Sandy Point to bear W. by N. or W. by S. and steer E. by S. or E. by N. thro deepest water of channel, when Sankoty Head bears S. W. shape your course from N. to E. S. E., clear of all dangers.”

Next to the long dimensions of Smith's Point in those days, and the existence of the Gravelly Islands, the formation of “Coutu” is the next most noticeable feature. First, Second and Third points were not so pronounced in those days, and the bays between were not so indented.

The question that naturally arises: “Why did the British Admiralty go to such lengths in charting the approaches and surrounding waters at Nantucket?”

Nantucket during the Revolution adopted a course of neutrality which was supported by the majority of the merchants and families on the island. The influence of the Society of Friends gave this policy its strength, and the political advocates of the “ragged Continentals” adopted the policy of passive resistance in order to save the island from pillage and ruin.

But there is another factor—the importance of the whaling fleet. The Admiralty realized the value of this great fleet manned by experienced whalers. It is a fact that it sought to induce the islanders to move to English ports when the success of the Revolution became apparant. It is not unreasonable to assume that the Admiralty might have expected Nantucket to throw in its lot with the British following the Treaty of Paris, and thus become an outpost of Britain like Bermuda. The importance of the whalerfishery was fully recognized by Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, and the realization was not lost in the shrewd political maneuvering of the indefatigable “Cousin Benjamin” Franklin at his post in France during the final drafting of the treaty which freed the Thirteen Colonies from the mother country's fumbling control.

Nov. 24, 1947

## FOR SALE!

A cottage at the Cliffs recently occupied by Professor Henry Mitchell.

PRICE \$1250.

Has six rooms, a porch, and about seven thousand feet of land. Apply to

GEORGE W. MACY,  
Real Estate Agent.

1947

#### U. S. Coast Survey.

In the last very valuable Report of Prof. A. D. Bache, reference is made to the operations in this region, as carried out under the charge of our townsman, Sub-Assistant Henry Mitchell. The U. S. coast survey schr. Bowditch, now at New York, has on board Mr. MITCHELL's surveying party, who are engaged upon the investigation of tides and currents in their varied relations with physical geography. This new and fruitful field of labor, falling, as it does, peculiarly within the province of a coast survey, has for its object the study of those agencies to whose constant action is due the formation of shoals and sand bars, the natural dredging of channels, the changes in the configuration of the sea coast, as well as the effects following the erection of artificial structures in the sea, and removal of rocks from channels. It embraces the past, and predicts the future history of our coast. These investigations are conducted by Professor Bache, the Superintendent of the Coast Survey, who lays down the plan of the work to be filled out and executed by Mr. MITCHELL. This party have just completed an investigation of Hell Gate, and are now about leaving for Nantucket Sound. The examination of New York Bar will engage their attention later in the season. Subjoined we extract Prof. Bache's remarks relative to Mr. Mitchell's labors:

Last year I directed a series of observations on the interference tides of Nantucket and the Vineyard Sounds, and gave my personal attention to the observations until in operation, when I left them under the charge of Sub-Assistant Henry Mitchell, who carried out my design with signal ability. This year we have taken up the results where the computations of the last year's work showed we had arrived, and have sought, by additional observations, to unravel some of the still tangled skein of these tides. The object attained last year, and sought this, are stated in a general way in Appendix No. 33. I must not here omit to state that the powerful analysis of Professor Pierce has been directed to this subject in consequence of the interest which he found in some of the results of last year, and that I have great hope of assistance in reducing this complex system to order, from his mature study of the problem which it presents.

June 19, 1857

OBITUARY.—Peleg Mitchell, who died on Tuesday morning last at the age of eighty years, was a life-long member of the Society of Friends, being one of the few who had remained steadfast in the faith of their ancestors. He followed throughout the active period of his life the business of a tin-plate worker, and has ever been distinguished for his firm adherence to principle, being held in the highest esteem by all for his upright and conscientious character. He was a brother of the late Hon. William Mitchell.

Aug. 5, 186 —



## THE INQUIRER.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21, 1847.

☞ We cheerfully give up the place which we are accustomed to occupy ourselves, to make room for the following very excellent article, which we are sure our readers will find greatly more interesting and instructive than anything we should be likely to write.

### THE GREAT TELESCOPE AT CAMBRIDGE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE INQUIRER:—

Permit me through the medium of thy paper, to make known the result of an evening's opportunity, which on the 15th inst. it was my rich privilege to enjoy, in the examination of various celestial objects with the gigantic Equatorial Telescope recently erected in the new Observatory at Cambridge.

It is known to the public generally, that for several years past, preparations have been in progress at Cambridge, for the mounting of this noble instrument, which, during the same period, has been in course of construction at Munich, in Germany. In view of the immense pains and cost involved, it was an interesting and fearful question whether its performance would equal the anticipations so long and anxiously indulged by the parties interested; and before speaking of this, it may be useful briefly to advert to some of its properties, though a far more extended and scientific description of it will doubtless be prepared by the able director of the Observatory, William C. Bond, and ultimately published by the committee of examination.

The pier on which it rests is of masonry, consisting of blocks of granite. It is a frustum of a cone, 20 feet in diameter at its base, and 10 at its top, and about 40 feet in height; its base, however, is twenty feet below the surface of the ground. On its flat and level top is placed the pedestal, to which the telescope is attached. It is a huge block of granite, thirteen tons in weight, handsomely wrought, and of a construction adapted to the Equatorial apparatus, consisting of ponderous masses of brass, and weighing, with the tube, certainly not less than four tons; and yet so ingeniously and perfectly is friction evaded, that the merest child can give it motion, and direct it to any point in the heavens.

The object-glass of the instrument is fifteen inches in diameter, in the clear; its focal length is 23 feet, and the length of the instrument, including the sliding tube, about 24 feet.

That the reader may not deceive himself by comparing these dimensions with those of the telescope constructed by Sir William Herschell, or the greater one more recently made by Lord Rosse, he may be reminded that these are reflecting telescopes, with metallic mirrors, and for equal duty, with the exception of what is termed space penetrating power, must greatly exceed in size. Suffice it to say then, that the telescope at Cambridge is of the refracting kind, its optical duties being performed by lenses; and to obtain a lens of fifteen inches in diameter, of a sufficient purity to represent the object in perfect shape and color, under high magnifying powers, is an art of inconceivable difficulty, and at present, I believe, has never been successfully accomplished by any other establishment than the one in which this telescope was manufactured. The secret was imparted by the lamented Fraunhofer, and so fearfully tenacious are they of the minutiae of the movements, that it is said they are unwilling to use any other poker to stir the melted mass, than that which was employed by that illustrious man. No larger refracting telescope has ever been in successful operation in the world.

It is of corresponding size with the boasted instrument at the Imperial Observatory at Pulkova, manufactured at the same establishment; but the Cambridge lens is warranted to be as good, and by the maker believed to be better. This was also the opinion of Simms, the celebrated manufacturer of England, who was employed to inspect the lenses, side by side. The immense labor necessary in mounting and adjusting an instrument of this construction and magnitude, without previous practice or experience, was greatly diminished by those preparations which the skill and ingenuity of the Director enabled him to effect, while the instrument and its various equipments were in Germany; but the period since its arrival, has not yet been sufficient to render the adjustment perfect, nor is it at present pretended to be fully prepared for use.

To counteract the apparent diurnal motion of the celestial objects, which is continually throwing them out of the field of ordinary telescopes, (a great annoyance, especially when high powers are employed,) a clock work is attached to the Equatorial axis, so constructed as to give to the instrument a quiet and steady sidereal motion, contrary to the motion of the earth, and which by a slight modification may be applied to the solar or lunar motion; but it is generally sufficient when adjusted to a star. The effect of this arrangement is to keep the object for several hours constantly in the centre of the field of view.

The night of the 15th was by no means a favorable one. With the exception of scattering cirri, it was cloudless, but the atmosphere was smoky, as it had been for the previous fortnight. The first object to which, at my request, the telescope was directed, was the planet Venus, invisible to the naked eye, it being yet day-light. The instrument was, however, adjusted to the Right Ascension and Declination of the planet, and the clock work set in motion, when the object made its appearance in the centre of the field, and, although veiled with smoke, and obscured by day-light, it met the eye with a glare. What will be the effect of a view of this planet, in the absence of twilight, in a clear, autumnal evening, can only be imagined. The planet was only fourteen degrees from the horizon. The intervening dense atmosphere of the earth, the mist and vapor always existing so near its surface, all magnified by the instrument, were not sufficient to prevent a rich display of its disc, half-illuminated, and much resembling the moon at the quarter, except a dusky hue, which I attributed to the dense atmosphere of the planet. The view exceeded any idea that I had entertained of the performance of the instrument; but our opportunity was abridged by the necessity of catching a glimpse at the moon, still nearer the horizon, and already veiling herself with cirri. The first object on the lunar surface that met my eye, was the yawning gulf Endymion, wide, deep and dark; the line of illumination leaped from side, leaving a frightful gap between. The mountains generally stood out in bold relief, casting shadows black as midnight; indeed, the entire length of the line dividing the

light from the dark hemisphere, exhibited a mass of ruin of unspeakable magnificence. The clock work was hardly adjusted, when the moon set.—Notwithstanding the brevity of the opportunity and the obscurity of the moon, I satisfied myself of the existence of the grey light spoken of by Schroeter, indicating a twilight only compatible with the existence of a lunar atmosphere; a far more favorable opportunity is probably near at hand, and this mooted question will be set at rest.

At a later period of the evening our attention was directed to test objects. On a previous evening, the double star, Gamma Coronæ, had been well separated, with a power of 720. The mere separation of this star is thought to have been the highest attainment of Prof. Struve, with the Imperial instrument, but it was divided by the Cambridge instrument without effort. This star was examined in 1832, by Sir J. Herschell, with his twenty feet Reflector, when he only saw a round disc without a companion.

The point of faint light also, near Alpha Capricorn, which President Smyth says long baffled his researches, was boldly exhibited by the Cambridge instrument. Sir John Herschell was led to suppose that this object was seen by reflected light,—a field of investigation which will not be likely to escape the attention of the Cambridge observers.

The companion of Antares, though obscured by haze and smoke, was very conspicuous. Sir J. Herschell, while at the Cape of Good Hope, could not have missed it for a moment, if he had turned his telescope upon it, inasmuch as it may be detected under favorable circumstances in this latitude, by a five feet Equatorial.

The telescope was now directed to the close double star, Eta Coronæ. Close indeed it has been of late years, having set at defiance most of the telescopes in the world. It was at one time a test object for telescopes, but it has recently been closed. It nevertheless yielded to our power at once, and the dark thread which separated it, could not have measured more than one third of a second.

The instrument was next adjusted to the annular nebula between Beta and Gamma, in the constellation of the Lyre, and the clock-work being applied, an opportunity was afforded me which I

had often craved, for a deliberate survey of an object, which, with smaller and less powerful instruments, had deeply interested me. With ordinary instruments it appears to be a ring or wreath of stars, being entirely vacant in the centre, not unlike what we might suppose to be the appearance of the Milky Way, viewed as a whole at an immense distance. Seen through the Cambridge telescope, it is no longer a ring, its centre is no longer dark, but filled with a multitude of small, faint stars. Lord Rosse's powerful reflector represented the interior as nebulous, a circumstance of which I was not aware when at Cambridge, and hence did not speak of its resolvability, but I am quite sure the individual stars, though faint, were distinctly seen.

The double star, 61 Cygni, now engaged our attention; thus honored, only on account of the rank it holds in the history of science, being memorable for the researches of Bessel, to whom it revealed its parallax. I was struck, however, with the small, neat, round disc of the individual stars, giving additional evidence to that already obtained from their annual motion, that, distant as they may be by our means and modes of measurement, these bodies are comparatively near.

Search was now made for the double-headed shot, or Dumb-bell nebula, as it is called, situated in the Fox's breast. The instrument was set to its position, and it appeared in the field. The director had scarcely applied his eye to the telescope, before he expressed the opinion that the nebula was resolved. The assistant observer was then called upon to examine it, and repeatedly said, "it is resolved." I then applied my own eye, and found it to consist of closely packed, but of individual stars. I am thus minute, because this has been uniformly numbered among the irresolvable nebulae. It was first discovered by Messier, many years since, and described by him as an oval nebula without a star. The Earl of Rosse, as we are informed by the President of the Astronomical Society of London,\* applied his powerful reflector to this object, and went so far as to say that "it exhibited symptoms of resolvability"; but he did not resolve it; nor am I aware that it has ever before yielded to the power of the telescope.

The next object of scrutiny was the delightful cluster in Hercules. This was a sort of dessert to the entertainment,—the sweetmeat of the feast. Well might Prof. Nichol say, that "no plate can give a fitting representation of it," and well might he add, that "no one ever saw it for the first time through a telescope, without uttering a shout of wonder;" but I am sure that if the Professor were once to see it himself, through the Cambridge instrument, his astonishment would be unutterable. No new feature was exhibited, but its beauty and brilliancy were greatly magnified.

The beautiful star, Alpha Lyre, had now reached the meridian, and, from its high Northern Declination, was much above the mist of the atmosphere. With this we were to take our leave of "these life-inspiring suns of other worlds." When the telescope was adjusted to this star, such was its dazzling brightness, and so thickly was it surrounded by telescopic companions, that the assistant astronomer shouted when it met his eye. The powers employed on this occasion, ranged from 250 to 750. The instrument is furnished with eye pieces magnifying two thousand times.

Among the results which may be anticipated from this capital instrument, is the detection of planets revolving about the fixed stars, and which are strongly indicated by those faint points of white light, or minute stars, which cluster about Alpha Lyre, of which I counted twenty-three, and the sharper eye of the assistant observer numbered thirty-five. Constant measurements of these with high powers, will, it may be confidently expected, at no distant day make known the motions and laws of these wonderfully remote and complicated systems.

WM. MITCHELL.

Nantucket, 7th mo 19th, 1847.

\* Smyth's "Cycle of Celestial Objects," page 371.

**METEOROLOGICAL.**—Hon Wm. Mitchell states in the Mirror that the fall of rain and melted snow at Nantucket during the last four months, is twenty-two and a half inches, which is nearly two-thirds the quantity that fell during the year 1856, and more than one half of the mean annual quantity during the last nine years.



[From the Poughkeepsie Eagle.]

REMINISCENCES OF WILLIAM MITCHELL, FATHER OF PROF. MARIA MITCHELL. — Sarah K. Bolton's picturesque career of Prof. Maria Mitchell as copied in the Eagle of February 17th needs some further explanation in order to do justice to her honored father. The writer of this had the privilege of being one of his pupils for five years and also frequently a visitor in his family, enjoying especially the intimate friendship of his oldest daughter. She was never a school teacher though a younger sister Annie (Mrs. Macy) at one time taught in the High School at Nantucket. William Mitchell was not only a man of genial and social qualities, but of marked ability in the various positions which he so honorably filled during his life. As a teacher he was successful. With his uniform kindness and agreeable manner he had the rare faculty of making his pupils feel happy, and while they were pursuing their studies, they could learn useful lessons for life, through his teaching and example. Many pleasant memories of those school days are still retained. After he gave up teaching he was secretary of the Insurance Office for a few years and was then called to the position of Cashier in the Pacific Bank at Nantucket which place he acceptably filled for 25 years and Treasurer of Savings Institution for 16 years.

He was a representative to the Legislature of his native state, also a Senator, and for a time council for the Governor. He was a member and chairman several years of the Board of Overseers of Harvard College.

He lectured on Astronomy in Worcester, Boston, Hudson, N. Y., and other cities. He calculated and observed eclipses and frequently contributed to Scientific journals.

In regard to farming and fishing he never practiced fishing and his only farming was confined to a few acres of land about a mile from town, where during his banking days, he built a cottage for summer resort and recreation, where he delighted to pet his two brindle cows, and feed his pigs, of which he kept just two, and these always white. Here, with his family about him, and with the pure sea breeze in every breath, he continued to teach them, not only of the starry heavens, but of the plants and flowers that grew all about them.

Of his wife, Lydia Coleman Mitchell, I need only say that she was a valued mother to her large family and a true helpmeet to her husband.

Nine children lived to mature age, a twin sister of the youngest son dying in infancy. Their home was truly an attractive place to their numerous visitors—a social, elevated and genial atmosphere prevailing at their board when all were gathered—which the writer has many times enjoyed in by-gone years. Of this family, while Prof. Mitchell is worthy of all the honor given her, she is not the only one who has made a mark in the world.

Capt. Andrew Mitchell, the eldest son, in early life followed his compass and quadrant, not only in the Atlantic Ocean, but around Cape Horn in the Pacific in pursuit of whales—and later, was commander of a merchant vessel—Frank brought up at his father's elbow in the bank, is yet a banker and broker in Chicago. William Forster of Cincinnati, in his youth studied the theology of Fox, Penn and Barclay in his father's library, and, like his honored parents, is an Orthodox Friend in his religion and a writer and preacher of emineuce.

Henry, the youngest son, has been for many years employed by the Government in Coast Survey, where his labor is much appreciated. Of the other daughters who have all married I need only say they are equally honorable and useful in their several spheres. The oldest son and daughter are not living, Maria being the oldest surviving.

When Maria entered Vassar College her father came with her, his home being with her after his wife's death. There, in comparative retirement, his latest days were spent, and even in this closing period of his life he was useful, as she has testified, his knowledge and experience in Astronomical science being of valuable service to her in the prosecution of her work. He died at the college, his eldest daughter being with him also in the last days, and thus closed in peace the useful life of one who was beloved and honored by his family, and many friends.

E. H.

Mar. 24, 1887

[From the Poughkeepsie Eagle.]

REMINISCENCES OF WILLIAM MITCHELL, FATHER OF PROF. MARIA MITCHELL. — Sarah K. Bolton's picturesque career of Prof. Maria Mitchell as copied in the Eagle of February 17th needs some further explanation in order to do justice to her honored father. The writer of this had the privilege of being one of his pupils for five years and also frequently a visitor in his family, enjoying especially the intimate friendship of his oldest daughter. She was never a school teacher though a younger sister Annie (Mrs. Macy) at one time taught in the High School at Nantucket. William Mitchell was not only a man of genial and social qualities, but of marked ability in the various positions which he so honorably filled during his life. As a teacher he was successful. With his uniform kindness and agreeable manner he had the rare faculty of making his pupils feel happy, and while they were pursuing their studies, they could learn useful lessons for life, through his teaching and example. Many pleasant memories of those school days are still retained. After he gave up teaching he was secretary of the Insurance Office for a few years and was then called to the position of Cashier in the Pacific Bank at Nantucket which place he acceptably filled for 25 years and Treasurer of Savings Institution for 16 years.

He was a representative to the Legislature of his native state, also a Senator, and for a time council for the Governor. He was a member and chairman several years of the Board of Overseers of Harvard College.

He lectured on Astronomy in Worcester, Boston, Hudson, N. Y., and other cities. He calculated and observed eclipses and frequently contributed to Scientific journals.

In regard to farming and fishing he never practiced fishing and his only farming was confined to a few acres of land about a mile from town, where during his banking days, he built a cottage for summer resort and recreation, where he delighted to pet his two brindle cows, and feed his pigs, of which he kept just two, and these always white. Here, with his family about him, and with the pure sea breeze in every breath, he continued to teach them, not only of the starry heavens, but of the plants and flowers that grew all about them.

Of his wife, Lydia Coleman Mitchell, I need only say that she was a valued mother to her large family and a true helpmeet to her husband.

Nine children lived to mature age, a twin sister of the youngest son dying in infancy. Their home was truly an attractive place to their numerous visitors—a social, elevated and genial atmosphere prevailing at their board when all were gathered—which the writer has many times enjoyed in by-gone years. Of this family, while Prof. Mitchell is worthy of all the honor given her, she is not the only one who has made a mark in the world.

Capt. Andrew Mitchell, the eldest son, in early life followed his compass and quadrant, not only in the Atlantic Ocean, but around Cape Horn in the Pacific in pursuit of whales—and later, was commander of a merchant vessel—Frank brought up at his father's elbow in the bank, is yet a banker and broker in Chicago. William Forster of Cincinnati, in his youth studied the theology of Fox, Penn and Barclay in his father's library, and, like his honored parents, is an Orthodox Friend in his religion and a writer and preacher of emineuce.

Henry, the youngest son, has been for many years employed by the Government in Coast Survey, where his labor is much appreciated. Of the other daughters who have all married I need only say they are equally honorable and useful in their several spheres. The oldest son and daughter are not living, Maria being the oldest surviving.

When Maria entered Vassar College her father came with her, his home being with her after his wife's death. There, in comparative retirement, his latest days were spent, and even in this closing period of his life he was useful, as she has testified, his knowledge and experience in Astronomical science being of valuable service to her in the prosecution of her work. He died at the college, his eldest daughter being with him also in the last days, and thus closed in peace the useful life of one who was beloved and honored by his family, and many friends.

E. H.

Mar. 24, 1887

MITCHELL.—Arthur Mitchell, aged 71, died at his home, 138 Pleasant street, last evening, after a year's illness with consumption of the bowels. He had been confined to the house several months. Last Sunday he suffered a paralytic stroke from which he did not rally. Mr. Mitchell was born at Nantucket and was of Quaker parentage. He came to Holyoke in 1849. In 1852 he was married to Mary E. White, of this city, who survives him with one daughter, Alice W. Mitchell, formerly teacher in the local schools, now of Brooklyn, N. Y. He also leaves a brother, Andrew Mitchell, of Mystic, Ct., and a nephew, Robert Mitchell, of this city. Mr. Mitchell was in company with his brother, Robert Mitchell, under the firm name of Mitchell Bros., clothiers, on High street, for a number of years. Later, Mr. Mitchell conducted a tailoring business over Ball's drug store. Mr. Mitchell was one of the organizers of the Unitarian church and for a great many years has been clerk of the society. He was a quiet, unassuming man of the old school, and respected by all who knew him. He was a lover of nature, delighting in long walks in the country, and had considerable gift of poetry. Some of his poems have been published at various times in the Springfield Republican and elsewhere.

Arthur Mitchell was one of the rare types of men who make such charming characters in fiction. While it would probably be overdrawn to say that he walked with his head always in the clouds, yet he combined his tailoring business with a great deal of idealizing. He might be described as the literary tailor, for while he seamed and pressed and fitted his mind was often on some gem of poetical thought, that, however, never made him the less successful tailor. Idealizing with him was thoroughly possible along with his business. Mr. Mitchell composed a great amount of poetry. Some of it found publication in the old Boston Weekly Transcript years ago. The Springfield Republican used some. And his lines to Mt. Tom, beginning "Like a Giant He Stands," have been quoted far and wide for their fine thought and style. But most of Mr. Mitchell's poetry has never seen the light of publication and includes long romances and legends that might well be given out. In other ways Mr. Mitchell was a high thinker, with a taste for Emerson and kindred great minds. With all this he was a man of singular personal charm and sweetness of character. The writer was chatting with a charming old Nantucket lady not long ago and mentioned knowing Arthur Mitchell. "Arthur Mitchell," she said. "Why be used to sit next me in the high school more than fifty years ago. He was a fine boy and youth. He couldn't help but be. He came of some of the best stock in America. There are none better than the Mitchells. They used to be a fine old Quaker family and with the decline of Quakerism it was the thing for Arthur Mitchell to become the idealizing Unitarian that he was."—Holyoke Transcript, 14th inst.



## ASTRONOMICAL.

### Report of the Committee to Visit the Observatory of Harvard College, presented to the Overseers at the Meeting on Thursday, Feb 10, 1859.

TO THE OVERSEERS OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY:

The committee for visiting the Observatory appointed by your body in February last, having attended to that duty now respectfully report, that in conformity with the notice of the President of the University, they met in the Directors' room at 11 A. M., of the 15th of December last. Present, Dr. Sparks, Robert Treat Paine, Esq., J. L. Bowditch, Esq., Hon. R. C. Winthrop, Dr. Henry C. Perkins, and Wm. Mitchell, and notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, they were subsequently joined by the Hon. and venerable Josiah Quincy, whose period of usefulness has reached its 88th year. A general survey of the grounds and shrubbery about the Observatory was sufficient to indicate that proper attention had been given to this department. A small portion of the grounds having been in the use of the Botanic Garden in such manner as did not perfectly exempt the instruments from dust, the committee made such suggestions as the case seemed to demand. The buildings since the last report have needed but slight repairs, and the practical operations of the great dome still give evidence of its strength and its skilful construction, as well as a confirmation of the principle of the spherical form. The director acknowledges that the dome, as well as the pier which supports the great equatorial, are all that can be desired. Indeed, the fact that for several years there has been no re-adjustment of the polar axis of the telescope, furnishes unmistakable testimony to the firmness of the structure which sustains it. This noble instrument, the committee are happy to say, is still in perfect preservation; and continues to give the satisfaction of former years. The lenses of the object glass have been separated during the last year, and no enlargement of the minute spots heretofore noticed has been detected. The observations and measurements made by this instrument appear to the committee to be of the utmost value in extending astronomical science; and the course pursued by the observers, not so much to accumulate observations on the same object as to apply its power to the examination of the more remote ones, appears to us to be judicious. Observations for the revision of the position and magnitude of the stars in the interesting Nebula of Orion, were commenced in October 1857 and brought to a close in March, 1858. A systematic and thorough examination of this astonishingly rich region of the heavens was called for by singular variations recognized at different periods. From the data thus obtained, a chart may be constructed which will faithfully represent the relative position and brightness of the separated stars. The great equatorial has also been applied to the frequent examination of the planets, Jupiter, Saturn, and Neptune, as well as many of the asteroids and comets.

Since our last visit to the Observatory, the improved Bowditch comet-seeker in the hands of Mr. Horrace P. Tuttle has been surprisingly successful. No fewer than five independent discoveries have crowned his efforts. The fourth in the order of these discoveries was the great comet of Donati, first seen at Cambridge on the 28th of June last; and it having very early and while yet telescopic, given promise of great brilliancy, extensive preparations were made to subject it to close scrutiny. The expectations of the observers were fully realized; and from the 28th of June to the 25th of October, their exertions were unremitting. If we except the comet of 1811 (its rival in beauty, and its superior in the period of its visibility,) no recorded comet gave greater facilities for the investigation of its physical properties. Of these favorable circumstances the observers availed themselves; and the fruits of their labors so far as we have been able to learn, are unequalled. The various drawings of this interesting object faithfully and skilfully executed by Mr. Henry G. Fette and the young Bond were examined by the committee, with admiration. They exhibit at a glance the various changes and vagaries of the comet. These drawings have since been engraved, and in connection with the explanations and observations of the assistant, have been published and circulated extensively in a treatise which reflects the highest honor upon the Observatory and upon its enlightened author.

In their last year's report, the Committee dwelt upon the labors of the preceding year in the delineation of celestial objects by photography. They believed they then saw the germ of an invaluable mode of celestial research. In this they have not yet been disappointed. Their anticipations of the progress of a single year have been more than realized. The Director in his report of last year alluded to the possibility of distinguishing stars by their chemical action, and the investigations of the assistant observer leave no question of its practicability; and the curious fact is given that the stars, Alpha-Lyrae and Arcturus, though of nearly the same magnitude as seen by a telescope, or unassisted vision, yet in photographic power the former surpasses the latter by seven times. The success which has attended the zealous labors in this department of Mr. Vico P. Bond, has animated him with the prospect that a new era in stellar astronomy is decidedly at hand. It is certainly cause of reasonable gratulation that this important step was first taken at this Observatory, and will forever reflect credit on the skill and persevering industry of the observers.

At the instance of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey, a large number of observations of the stars constituting the Pleiades have been observed simultaneously with observers at several positions near the northern extremity of the Gulf of California, as well as on the border of the Lakes Michigan and Superior. It is gratifying to perceive that the electric recording apparatus so long in use in this Observatory, is appreciated in Europe, and under the title of the American method is now extensively used.

The magnetic instruments are still used for specific objects and for comparing other instruments in the government surveys. Continuous magnetic observations, however, have been long since abandoned, not more for the hopelessness of valuable results than from the necessity they imposed of employing several additional assistants.

The department of Meteorology appears to receive commendable attention. The indications of the barometer, the common thermometer, the maximum and minimum thermometer and hygrometer are registered four times daily and copies are monthly forwarded to the Agricultural Bureau at Washington. Hope may be still entertained, that almost fruitless as the labor of several thousand years has been, the day may not be distant when by corresponding assiduous observations, the great laws of atmospheric action may be so developed, as in some measure to secure the husbandman and the navigator from those casualties to which they have always been exposed.

Finally, the committee are satisfied from the report of the Director, and much other testimony and observation, that a great amount of labor has been performed, and well performed, during the last year, and they regret that the means are not in hand to give to the world, by way of publication, the large collection of results which are constantly accumulating.

The library continues to receive accessions from donations and exchanges, and the Director acknowledges the reception among other contributions of a complete set of the works of Dr. Franklin, from William Wells, Esq. He also acknowledges the indebtedness of the Observatory for "material aid" to one whose name he is not at liberty to disclose.

The committee have hitherto dwelt, on matters of an interesting and pleasing character. They come now to a most melancholy part of their duty, it is to speak of the death of the able Director of the Observatory, Prof. William Cranch Bond, which occurred on the evening of the 29th ult. On the 15th of December last, in somewhat feeble but usual health, and depressed by a family affliction, the death of Mrs. George P. Bond, he read to us in his wonted dignity and calmness his annual report, from which most of the facts in this report, are derived. His oral communications on the occasion, though given with his characteristic calmness, were strongly marked with the zeal in his favorite pursuit which has distinguished his whole life. Known and appreciated as an accurate and truthful observer, wherever the science of astronomy is cultivated, his death will be justly deemed a great loss to science. Several members of this committee have enjoyed the privilege of his counsel and friendship for more than thirty years, and in yielding to the mandate that time to him shall be no longer, their humble consciousness is, that a great and a good man is no more.

WM. MITCHELL,  
JOSHUA QUINCY,  
ROBERT C. WINTHROP,  
ROBERT T. PAINE,  
J. INGERSOLL BOWDITCH.

Feb. 9th, 1859.

## Funeral Services.

The funeral services of the late Hon. Joseph Mitchell were held in the Unitarian church on Thursday afternoon last. The remains were taken into the church from his late residence, Messrs. Frederick C. Sanford, David C. Baxter, Andrew M. Myrick, Edward W. Perry, Andrew Whitney and Joseph B. Macy acting as pall-bearers, an organ voluntary being played as the remains were taken up the aisle to the pulpit, on which was a beautiful display of flowers, arranged by loving hands. Rev. H. F. Bond, the pastor, read a brief Scripture lesson, and the choir sang the fitting anthem, "Thy Will, O, God, be done." The pastor then said:

We think there is great beauty and charm in the innocence of childhood. Certainly there is; and we have no misgivings as to their destiny; but that being is more beautiful, more charming, more glorious, who has passed through a long life of difficulties, temptations, perplexities and trials, and sustained an upright character. The positive virtues of manhood far surpass the sinlessness of infancy. More appropriate words than I can utter might be spoken of Mr. Mitchell by one of the many acquainted with him by long years of intercourse; yet to know him briefly were to respect and honor him, and my professional habit of distinguishing right and wrong may have enabled me better to appreciate and admire his excellencies of character.

The very family name of Mitchell has long been a synonym for goodness, and none have honored that name more than he. Scarce a stranger in town, however brief his stay, left without the conviction that there was one man at least who could hardly do wrong. He was sure there was one whom widows and orphans, and indeed all men, women and children trusted. And so this upright man became the adviser, the guardian, the trustee of many who needed his wisdom and

## OBITUARY.

For The Inquirer and Mirror.

Macy.—From the opening years of the century now drawing to a close, Nantucket has been pre-eminently distinguished for a helpful, intellectual, and highly cultivated type of womanhood. Among such women may honorably be enrolled the name of Anne Mitchell Macy, who died in Cambridge March 16, 1900, in the 80th year of her age. She was the daughter of Hon. William Mitchell, a noted astronomer of the island, and the widow of Alfred Macy, all of Nantucket. Among other accomplishments, the deceased was distinguished as a linguist, being well versed in seven languages. In her youth she was a teacher, at one time principal in the New Bedford High School for Girls, and later a teacher in the Coffin School at Nantucket. As vice-president of the Woman's Educational and Industrial Union, of Boston, she was active in good works. Her pen was frequently brought under contribution for papers and magazines, and any one who has read a poem which she wrote, called "Reasons—a True Story," would be charmed with the quality—the caustic flavor of her wit. Before her demise, by long years of confirmed invalidism she was "shut in" from that large circle, literary and intellectual, which she had so helped and ornamented in the prime of her career, before smitten by the hand of illness and prevented from activity in a broad sphere, where, through the brilliancy of her talents, she was calculated to shine. As her physical condition did not warp or eclipse her intellect, she was enabled to bear her confinement without a morbid consciousness of her many limitations, being able to meet her guests with smiles and words of cheer, making her sick room often a delightful trysting place for friends and kindred, and when at her best physically, for a host of admiring callers. As years rolled on and she was still secluded, she did not appear to experience an age of decrepitude and mental decay, but maintained her love for study, especially for classical literature, to the end of her life. To her it seemed a duty not to let the light of knowledge wane.

Could she speak from the bounds beyond, would she not say life is an entity which is not broken by what mortals call death? It persists, flows right on, and the pursuits which engage our time and attention on this side of the confines of existence may continue to interest all on the shores beyond.

She leaves a brother and two sisters and a large circle of loving friends, who may confidently congratulate her in having been assured

"On the cold cheek of Death smiles and roses are blending:

That beauty immortal awakes from the tomb."

ANNA GARDNER.

Apr. 14, 1900

who implicitly relied on his honesty. There is no grander object on this wide earth than a man of three or four score years without a shadow of reproach—a man so complete in his character and so thoroughly tested that his character and reputation have become one and the same. Next to the desire of a conscience void of offence before God is the ambition to be loved and honored of all men for solid worth. Joseph Mitchell has gone in and out among you for many, many years, always the same modest, even-tempered, wise, honest soul. He held many offices of honor and trust in your town and in your state. Filling them all well and often commended, how his noble ambition must have been satisfied! What peace to his soul in his consciousness of rectitude.

As trustee of the Coffin School, a position he long held, it is easy even for one who knew him no better than I, to understand how great the confidence placed in him by his associates—the respect and reverence with which he was regarded by the pupils. In departing he has left sweet memories for you all, and a wealth of example beyond all estimate of scales or measures.

It is easy to realize the immortality of excellence. We naturally have faith in goodness. There is also strong ground for hope that kinship in purity of spirit shall be vouchsafed sweet communion in time to come. It is not needful that we should know exactly what treasures the loving God has in store for the pure in heart and holy in life. Better it is to believe that riches for such souls must be greater than the heart can conceive. No suddenness of call can find such souls unprepared. Our friend was fitted to die by his fitness to live. We fear not for him—we mourn not for him—we mourn for ourselves. Let us be equally ready by steadfastness in duty and childlike confidence,

"As God leads me, it is mine  
To follow Him;  
Soon shall all wonderfully shine,  
Which now seems dim.  
Fulfilled be His decree!  
What He shall do for me,  
That shall my portion be,  
Up to the brim."

At the conclusion of the remarks, Mr. B. G. Tobey sang "Come, Ye Disconsolate," following which Dr. Arthur E. Jenks read the accompanying tender memorial:

In Memory of Hon. Joseph Mitchell.  
"Fallen Asleep" April 26, 1885.

BY DR. ARTHUR E. JENKS.

How beautiful is character! No crown  
Like this adorns the brow; its fadeless light  
Is brighter than the lustre of fine gold!  
No kingdom like the life of him who lies  
So peaceful in his rest—mourned by his friends,  
Our seaport town, and the old Commonwealth;  
The upright citizen, and Christian man!

May his pure mantle fall upon the son;  
His staff of honor for his strong right hand!  
His gift of love become the daughter's shrine:  
A memory, whose incense shall make sweet  
Their future years; weaving a golden thread  
Thro' all life's toil and care from earth to Heaven!

For the devoted wife, alone in her  
Great grief, th' example of her husband, his  
Fidelity to trust, now shines like some  
Fixed star, whose mild light shall still cheer her  
heart  
With faith in God and immortality!

"Nearer, My God, to Thee" was rendered by the choir, and after prayer, the funeral procession moved to Prospect Hill Cemetery, where the remains were interred.

May 7, 1885



## In Memoriam.

It may be said of Eleanor Williams Morgan, who, after a long illness, recently died in New York, that, although she was not a born Nantucketer, she was one of our birthright islanders. She had in her veins the blood of all the founding settlers and she dearly prized the privilege of that ancestry. Her maternal grandfather, Richard Mitchell, was one of the prominent sea-captains and ship-owners of the flourishing days. From her maternal grandmother, she inherited in full measure the Morton wit, famous through generations. Her mother, Mary Frances (Mitchell) Williams, was born and educated in Nantucket.

The daughter, while reared in Boston and educated there and at Wheaton Seminary, loved her "Tucket from childhood visits to the Island and from gay and tender family reminiscence. There was in her that insular sense of belonging to the place and cherishing it which goes with the "birthright."

In her early widowhood, Mrs. Morgan found comfort in making Nantucket her home. She was a devoted citizen, serving with courage, diligence, enthusiasm, and excellent judgment, civic and social causes. One may cite, by way of example, her able and enduring work for the Maria Mitchell Memorial Association, the Nantucket Historical Association, the Nantucket Cottage Hospital, the Abiah Folger Franklin Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and St. Paul's Church.

Furthermore, she was a true neighbor in the cordial sense of that word and a good companion. Her home on Orange Street—in Martin's Lane, as she preferred to say—was a delightful centre.

She had traveled widely and read amply and with discernment. Those who knew her revelled in her gift of telling a good story, sometimes from droll byways of Nantucket history, sometimes from the varied experience of a naval officer's wife. She was learned in Botany, especially of our Island, and also she had stories of interesting information about old china, old silverware, and early American furniture.

Her husband, the late Lieut. Stokeley Morgan, U. S. A., came from an Arkansas family. Through that family connection, she had intimate association with Southern life. On her father's side, she was of the Old Colony stock which "came over" with Winthrop's Company. Her patriotism rejoiced in the thought of the fusion of those separate traditions which have built and sustained our country. She liked to refer to the fact that her son's grandfathers had fought, one for the Confederate ideal, the other for that of the Union.

She is survived by her son and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Stokeley Morgan, of New York, and their two children; also by her brother, Boylston Williams, and his family, of Needham, Massachusetts.

This tribute to her memory is offered with a friend's personal affection, also in affectionate reminiscence of ties of family friendship, through several generations, fostered and enjoyed on our Island.

Florence Bennett Anderson.

## TOWN AND COUNTY.

### OBITUARY.

CAPT. RICHARD MITCHELL, whose death we noticed in our last, was born at Nantucket, Feb. 4, 1819, and descended from a long line of ancestors intimately connected with the business and prosperity of our island. In 1842, he was one of the firm of Richard Mitchell & Sons, successors to the firm of Paul Mitchell & Sons, and at that time was largely engaged in the whale fishery and in the manufacture of oil and candles. Unfortunate voyages, followed by the great fire of 1846, which swept over the business part of the town, caused losses which could not be retrieved, and they were obliged to succumb to the force of circumstances over which they had no control.

In 1848 he sailed for California, and was among the earliest of the pioneers of the Golden State. From thence he proceeded to China, and on his arrival home was given command of the bark General Taylor, in the European trade. He afterwards commanded the ship Orpheus, one of the largest and finest ships of Boston, belonging to the firm of W. F. Weld & Co. Subsequently he commanded other ships, and retiring from the sea, entered public service in the office of the State Paymaster, and afterwards in the office of the U. S. Appraiser, which position he held for twenty-two years and until he was attacked by his final sickness.

In his official duties he was polite, kind and ready to assist any who were unacquainted with the routine of the business on which they called. A gentleman of refinement and education, his voyages gave him opportunities for observation, and his mind was filled with facts and experiences which he related to his intimate friends in a most interesting way. In his family he was kind, affectionate, and tender hearted, and none were turned away in distress without relief, if within his power. His genial disposition won for him hosts of friends, and "none knew him but to love him."

Mar. 2, 1888

### For the Inquirer and Mirror.

Died, in Roxbury, Feb. 20th, Richard Mitchell, aged 69.

The above notice, in a city paper, tells, to a large following of friends and relatives, that our fellowman, who had lived among us in close relations, and whom we loved, has gone from our presence forever. Hundreds of such brief statements are written daily, and, no doubt, many of them mark the closing of lives equally deserving of the tribute we here pay our friend; but it seems to me, that, whenever a life, so eminently unselfish, so full of good deeds, and withal, so full of cheerfulness, is ended here, it should be brought to the attention of all of us who remain, for our good example.

We cannot say that such natures die, for, like the setting sun, they leave a halo of brightness, which is caught up and reflected on all who knew them, and their influence is felt forever.

Richard Mitchell, like Robert Collyer, might have thanked God that he was "well-born." Descended from good stock on both sides, free from eccentricities, or the heritage of "genius," he was a healthy, happy man, whose beaming face and hearty greeting made one feel better all day for having met him. As one of his friends said: "Capt. Mitchell always walked on the sunny side of life." He thought it a privilege to labor, and even to bestow the fruits of his labor to anyone needing it; and when taking home to his loved ones some coveted gift or rare flowers, his face fairly shone with the joy it gave him.

His long service at sea and Nantucket birth, gave to his conversation and manner that quaintness and rare humor, which made him a most enjoyable companion. For twenty years or more, and until increasing illness compelled a resignation, he was connected with the Boston Custom House, where he was always a faithful worker and social favorite. Year after year, he daily wended his way over West Boston bridge and through Boston streets, usually avoiding horse-cars, until his small, compact figure and rosy face were well-known. He never thought it any hardship to go, nor wished a vacation, lest they might find out they could do without him!

When, a few weeks since, he was smitten with mortal illness, and that of a most painful type, he yielded to the inevitable with the same sweetness and patience he had ever shown. Though his suffering was at times intense, his countenance would always light up with all the old-time fervor, if any of his family approached his bedside. He was already to go, save for the pang of separation from her with whom he had walked in unvarying love for nearly fifty years.

I well remember his reply, when I asked him once if he was going to the City to see a display of fireworks. "No," he said, "they would be no sight to me; in my long life, and travels in foreign countries, have seen about all there is here, but, when I get to the other side," his face suddenly brightened up, "I expect there will be such wonderful things, as I never even dreamed of before."

So let us think of him as having passed from suffering into peace, as witnessing those grand sights which he had anticipated; while we believe that his spirit, freed from the burden of the flesh, shall go on developing in higher and still higher spheres even to perfection. God be praised that there are, here and there, such natures. They serve to cheer our sometimes fainting spirits, to strengthen our faith in humanity. Let those who now mourn the loss of his dear presence be grateful in their sorrow, that they have enjoyed him so long.

M. A. A.

FORT ERIE, March 6, 1888.

### OBITUARY.

MITCHELL.—Roland Greene Mitchell, of the firm of R. G. Mitchell & Co., candles, No. 141 Water Street and No. 380 South Street, died last evening at his home, No. 8, West Nineteenth Street, at an advanced age. He had been in declining health for some years, and for several months had been confined to his bed. His death was due to heart failure.

Mr. Mitchell was the son of Jethro Mitchell, of Nantucket Mass., who was at one time the largest ship-owner in the United States, and was also a man of some political prominence in his State. Jethro Mitchell married a Miss Greene, of the Rhode Island family of that name—a descendant of Gen. Nathaniel Greene, of Revolutionary renown—who was the mother of Roland Greene Mitchell. The latter, who was born in Massachusetts, was educated at a French school at Flushing, L. I., which was noted in its day. When twenty-five years old he went to Cincinnati, where he settled and became a leading man of business. He was at first agent there for several large concerns in New York and abroad—among the latter being the Baring Brothers of London. Then he organized and became President of the first inland marine insurance company in this country, which still exists in Cincinnati in a flourishing condition. Mr. Mitchell also organized and was the first President of the Mercantile Library Association of Cincinnati. He took an active part in establishing the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, and was the first President of that institution.

In 1850, after about twelve years' residence in Cincinnati, Mr. Mitchell came to this city, and, in connection with Monsieur Verden, a French financier, bought the Wright and Fouché patent for the manufacture of stearic acid and glycerine in this country. After fifteen years of devotion to this business, he relinquished the control of it and retired to a strictly private life. At least half of his time was passed at his beautiful country place on Long Island, which he called "Wildwood," and where he busied himself with his flowers, fruits and dairy products.

Mr. Mitchell was a man of marked refinement and of imposing presence, as well as of much mental force. He was fond of literature, and had read many books. Salmon P. Chase and he became warm friends in Cincinnati, where they bought adjoining houses, and their intimate relations ended only with the death of the Chief Justice. Much was said and done by Mr. Mitchell in Cincinnati, in connection with Mr. Chase, to foment and enlarge the anti-slavery movement.

Mr. Mitchell's father was a Quaker, and he himself was of that sect until he married Miss Cornelia Post of this city, when he was, by a stricter enforcement of the Friends' rule than obtains now, practically excommunicated. After that he became, like his wife, attached to the Protestant Episcopal Church, and at the time of his death he was a member of the Church of the Ascension. He leaves five sons and one daughter.—N. Y. Evening Post, 25th inst.

[Mr. Mitchell was a compeer of Mr. F. C. Sanford and James Austin, who are now the only two left of a large school.—ED.]

### For the Inquirer and Mirror.

Died, in Roxbury, Feb. 20th, Richard Mitchell, aged 69.

The above notice, in a city paper, tells, to a large following of friends and relatives, that our fellowman, who had lived among us in close relations, and whom we loved, has gone from our presence forever. Hundreds of such brief statements are written daily, and, no doubt, many of them mark the closing of lives equally deserving of the tribute we here pay our friend; but it seems to me, that, whenever a life, so eminently unselfish, so full of good deeds, and withal, so full of cheerfulness, is ended here, it should be brought to the attention of all of us who remain, for our good example.

We cannot say that such natures die, for, like the setting sun, they leave a halo of brightness, which is caught up and reflected on all who knew them, and their influence is felt forever.

Richard Mitchell, like Robert Collyer, might have thanked God that he was "well-born." Descended from good stock on both sides, free from eccentricities, or the heritage of "genius," he was a healthy, happy man, whose beaming face and hearty greeting made one feel better all day for having met him. As one of his friends said: "Capt. Mitchell always walked on the sunny side of life." He thought it a privilege to labor, and even to bestow the fruits of his labor to anyone needing it; and when taking home to his loved ones some coveted gift or rare flowers, his face fairly shone with the joy it gave him.

His long service at sea and Nantucket birth, gave to his conversation and manner that quaintness and rare humor, which made him a most enjoyable companion. For twenty years or more, and until increasing illness compelled a resignation, he was connected with the Boston Custom House, where he was always a faithful worker and social favorite. Year after year, he daily wended his way over West Boston bridge and through Boston streets, usually avoiding horse-cars, until his small, compact figure and rosy face were well-known. He never thought it any hardship to go, nor wished a vacation, lest they might find out they could do without him!

1888

June 29, 1899



## Free-Hand Portraits.

PROF. JOSEPH SIDNEY MITCHELL, A. M., M. D.

To whatever school of medical belief and science intelligent preferences, or convictions, may lean, it will be admitted that homeopathy as a theory of medicine has conquered and firmly holds a place in the domain of science, and has become securely established as a living factor in the social economy. If the older system claims greater weight of authority, the Baconian aphorism that "truth is the daughter of time, not of authority" is held an equivalent answer by the friends of the younger. And homeopathy is not a thing of sudden origin, but comprises in its growth the element of near a century of time; and, if its adherents hold the true theory of its real genesis, it is but the form into which the truth has been developing from the first, and dates its announcement as a doctrine to Hahnemann only, say, as astronomy does its true principles to Copernicus. On the score of authority, too, it is in point, and not without valuable suggestiveness to any school or system, to quote Lord Bacon on "so high a medical potentate as Galen; 'This is the man,' says Bacon, 'that would screen the ignorance and sloth of physicians from their deserved reproach, and preserve them unattacked, whilst himself most feebly and unequally pretends to perfect their art, and fill up their office. This is the man that, like the raging dog-star or the plague, devotes mankind to death and destruction by denouncing certain diseases to be incurable, taking away all glimmering of hope, and leaving no room for future industry. This is the man who makes his own fiction of mixtures to be nature's sole prerogative. Let him, then, be dismissed, and take along with him the whole train of his associates—these dispensatory compilers from the Arabians who have shown such folly in their theories, and from their supine and jejune conjectures amass together such a heap of promises, instead of real helps, from vulgar remedies.'"

Not, however, that homeopathsists would in these days retort charges of this kind on the intelligent physicians of the other school. For the truth and significant fact is that the relation, creditable alike to the intelligent and broad-minded of both schools, is one of mutual respect and indirect helpfulness, while whatever antagonism there is has become of the healthful kind which prevents co-operation only in the practical application of different methods.

Among the prominent, learned and broadly intellectual liberal men of the medical profession, one of the most distinguished is the subject of this sketch, Prof. Joseph Sidney Mitchell, A. M., M. D. When some years ago the question of the public recognition of the claims of homeopathy was being agitated, Prof. Mitchell was chosen by his conferees as chairman of a committee to urge these claims upon the proper authorities with a view to placing homeopathic physicians and surgeons in charge in the Cook County Hospital on the same footing with those of the other school. The choice was well vindicated in the results, and homeopathy and society, so far as it holds to homeopathy, are greatly indebted to Prof. Mitchell for the fact that it is represented in this public medical institution. But this incident is merely mentioned as one among other facts that might be adduced to show the high estimation in which Prof. Mitchell is held by the leading men of his own and the other school, and influential men of the city and community. He is to-day on the medical staff of this important hospital.

He was born in Nantucket, Massachusetts, December 9, 1839. His father was the Hon. Joseph Mitchell, of that State and place. He attended the grammar school of his native town, and afterwards the English high school in Boston until he reached the age of nineteen years. In 1859 he entered Williams College, from which institution he graduated with the honors of his class in 1863. He then entered Belvue Hospital Medical College, and graduated from that high medical institution in 1865, his term of study having been marked by close and laborious application. The same year he came to Chicago to enter upon the practice of his profession.

So marked was the impression made by the attainments and high personal qualities of the young and brilliant physician that in the short space of six months after the commencement of his practice he was appointed to the Lectureship of the chair of Surgical Anatomy in the Hahnemann Medical College of this city. This position he filled for a year, when he was elected to the chair of Physiology in this institution, which latter position he held for the period of three years. He was then advanced to the chair of Theory and Practice of Medicine, and in 1874 was still further advanced by being appointed Dean of the Faculty.

It was after attaining to all the honors of Hahnemann College that in 1876 he withdrew from the institution, and, assisted by Drs. Pratt, Streeter, Danforth, Woodyat and others, organized the Chicago Homeopathic College. The direct object of the organization of this new institution was the enlargement of the period and course of medical instruction, and the reduction of the higher and more thorough training to methods requiring the application of established tests for securing known degrees of proficiency in students in order to graduation. The object was a most commendable one, a desideratum in fact of the present advanced stage of the science and profession of medicine, and the splendid success that has attended the enterprise has been well-nigh worthy of the noble object. Prof. Mitchell was chosen to fill the highest position in the College, that of president and professor of Theory and Practice of Medicine. This position he still holds, and, it should be added, conspicuously adorns. *Natum tetigit quod non ornavit.* As a lecturer he stands almost unrivalled. With the finest analytic powers, the rarest insight into the subjects that come before him, and a bright enthusiasm that is irresistible, no one comes under his instruction without being charmed as well as bulid up in knowledge.

Prof. Mitchell has, as might be inferred from his ability and standing, been a voluminous contributor to various medical journals. He is a member of various medical societies, was one of the delegates to the international medical congress held in London in 1881, and was also delegate of the American Institute of Homeopathy held in London the same year. And the meaning and promise of a life thus briefly outlined is understood when it is reflected that Prof. Mitchell is now only forty-three years old.

[It is with pleasure we reprint the above highly complimentary notice of one of Nantucket's sons, which appeared in the *Chicago Weekly Magazine* of a recent date. Prof. Mitchell has won his position by earnest labor, and is deserving of every word of the above. We also are pleased to note that Dr. Clifford Mitchell, of the same city, grandson of Hon. Joseph Mitchell of this town, has won much praise from the medical press of the country in connection with a work he has just published on "Urinalysis," which, says the *Chicago Tribune*, "apart from its scientific value, possesses merits not commonly discoverable in special works written outside of France. \* \* \* Divided into two parts, the introduction to which treats of chemical and microscopical manipulations; the first part of the same to the examination of urine and the detection of its constituents; the second part, of the clinical significance of substances found by analysis; and the appendix of which relates to matters of lesser importance, the complete work presents a summary of all that has as yet been ascertained with regard to the value of urinalysis."—Eds.]

## THE ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 26, 1955



MITCHELL'S COTTAGE, MOORTOWN, BRIGHSTONE—the birthplace, in 1686, of Richard Mitchell, who was one of the early settlers in Rhode Island, U.S.A. One of his descendants was a famous American medical man, Dr. J. Sydney Mitchell, of Chicago, who was chairman of the World Congress of Physicians and Surgeons in 1893. Another was Miss Maria Mitchell the first American professional astronomer. Following references to this by the doctor's son, Mr. Leeds Mitchell, at the jubilee celebrations of the Nantucket Historical Association last year and the publication by "Vectensis" of particulars sent to him by the Rev. W. R. Buckett (Rector of Edmondsham, Dorset), who is a Brighstone man, several friends of the Mitchell family in America have visited the cottage during the summer and Mr. Leeds Mitchell hopes to visit it next spring. The visitors were taken to the cottage by the Rev. W. R. Buckett and his cousin (Mr. R. H. Buckett, of Brighstone), and they also saw entries about the Mitchell family in old records preserved by Mr. Maurice Attrill, formerly of Waytescourt.

(Woman)

With compliments of  
the Rev. W. R. Buckett  
Edmondsham, Rectory  
Wimborne, Dorset  
England



Mitchell Cottage  
Brighton, Eng.  
July 1956  
W. R. B.





THE LATE SIDNEY MITCHELL.

**"Mr. Great-Heart."**

*"He of whom we are about to speak is one that hath not his fellow."—John Bunyan.*

It is sad news that comes over the wires from Nantucket. We both felt that a strong, protecting wall had suddenly crumbled and let our defenses down against the enemy. Nantucket is very deep in the hearts of all Mr. Great-Heart's friends and for them he symbolized Nantucket.

How he loved the island! Every summer he would journey from New York to Nantucket; back and forth, week in and week out, year in and year out, for a whole faithful life-time through. No wonder he became an institution to every one on the Fall River, New Bedford and Nantucket steamers. Every porter, sailor, pilot and stevedore knew Sidney Mitchell and sometime or another felt his generosity. He became a part of their lives as he did all of us.

I shall miss the warm feeling of pleasure it always gave me when, after a day's sail, I rowed in from my moorings and saw the ensign blowing from the staff over his hospitable boathouse to tell that "Sid's here!" We'd shoot alongside the ancient *Muncemoosha*, tie up as we received a royal shout of welcome. I shall miss seeing the light in the window of his boathouse as I used to see it when I turned in, in my cabin on old North Wharf. It was particularly comforting to see it burning brightly at the end of the pier on the nights of the big north-easters.

I shall miss his laughter most of all as he roared at all our foibles. Human beings and their funny antics kept him constantly amused, and he laughed at himself the loudest!

I shall miss seeing him play the genial host to Nantucket's children, serving them ice cream and cakes, with a large cigar in his mouth and a happy twinkle in his eyes. I shall miss the rakish set of his old yachting cap, as he walked up old North Wharf, stopping to "gam" with the Wharf Rats along the way. I shall miss his wise advice, his strength of decision in big affairs, and the generous ring in his voice when one went to him in times of stress.

Never mind what the charity, down would go his hand into his large pocket, as the poor of the Island may well testify. How many old shut-in men and women knew the tenderness of his protecting hand through the years!

It doesn't take much imagination to realize the welcome he is getting on the other side by the Great Company. There will be the sound of joyous laughter if I'm not mistaken. How surprised he will be to find himself their honored guest.

Well, it is for us, his life-long friends who are left behind, to tighten our belts and close up the ranks and keep stoutly on. We may thank God we have memories to give us strength, and the memory of Sidney Mitchell of Nantucket Island is among the dearest of our lives.

—Austin Strong.

Burlingame, Cal., Feb. 28.

**The Passing of Sidney Mitchell  
A Distinct Loss to Nantucket.**

Sidney Mitchell, one of the best known among those residents of Nantucket who spend many months here every year, and a descendant of one of the island's distinguished families, died on Friday week, Feb. 25, at the Flower Hospital, New York City. He had not been in good health for several years.

Word of his passing reached the island late Friday evening and the news spread rapidly, for the knowledge of his philanthropy here was well-known, while he had a wide circle of friends and acquaintances who were shocked and grieved to learn of his death.

Sidney Mitchell was born in Chicago in the year 1875, the eldest son of Dr. Joseph Sidney Mitchell and Helen Leeds Mitchell. His paternal grandfather, Joseph Mitchell, was a vice-president of the Pacific National Bank of Nantucket, a Representative to the General Court, and a cousin of Maria Mitchell, the famous woman astronomer. Among his island ancestors was Peter Folger, the grandfather of Benjamin Franklin. He was a member of the Mayflower Society through his descent from John Howland.

Following an attendance at the University of Chicago, Mr. Mitchell became a member of a brokerage concern in Chicago. A short time later he was admitted to partnership in the firm of Milmine, Bodman & Co., of Chicago, where he remained until 1906.

In was in this latter year that his genius as an organizer attracted national attention when he re-organized the United Box Board and Paper Company, soon becoming its president. This company, one of the largest manufacturers of heavy paper and pasteboards in the nation, occupied his first efforts, and he remained its chief executive until the time of his death. He was also president of the Leedsmere Corporation, N. Y., and of the Benton & Fairfield Railroad, of Maine. For a good many years he was a director of the Chicago Stock Exchange.

He was a member of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His clubs included the Union League and New York Yacht Club, of New York; the Chicago Club and Saddle and Cycle Club of Chicago; the Pacific Club, the Nantucket Yacht Club, the Sankaty Head Golf Club, the Nantucket Historical Association, the Unitarian Church, the Coffin School Association, and the Wharf Rat Club of Nantucket. He was also a member of the Mayflower Society and the John Howland Pilgrim

A resident of Nantucket for several months in every year since his first coming here as a boy, Mr. Mitchell held a never-ceasing interest for the island. His generosity was always a source of happiness in a great many ways and his benefactions here were many and varied. No one man ever contributed so much of material help to Nantucket as a community.

It is understood that, in his will, Mr. Mitchell has left several large sums in trust to a number of island institutions. The exact amount of the gifts will not be known until the will is filed.

His philanthropy was not restricted to organizations nor to groups. The number of individuals to whom he lent a helping hand will never be known, as they were numerous beyond common knowledge. During every drive for funds which was made by an island organization, his was a generous and large contribution.

Children always held a warm place in his heart. Twice a year—at Christmas and Hallowe'en—he donated large sums to be spent on community parties for the children, in memory of his mother who resided here during the last years of her life. He maintained this practice until his death.

Examples of his keen interest in everything pertaining to Nantucket recurred from time to time. For instance, when he learned that a hall was to be built here by a church, with the purpose for community benefit, his contribution was a deciding factor in the culmination of the plans. Of recent occurrence, also, was his gift for the renovation of the interior of the Unitarian Church. One of his gifts typical of his close following of island events was a donation of enough money to insure last year's senior class of the

*Continued on Second Page.*

MAR 5, 1938

JUNE 27, 1879



## One Of Founders Of Maria Mitchell Association Has Many Capabilities

This week Petticoat Row finds at home a gracious woman of many capabilities, one whose family traditions belong almost completely to the Island, yet her personal experiences and travel have carried her often beyond insular limits.

This meeting of the past and present in Mrs. Albert F. Shurrocks, grand-niece of Maria Mitchell, teacher at the Friend's Select School in Philadelphia for 13 years, former director of Natural Science at Hinchman House and private secretary for two years to Mrs. Charles S. Hinchman, one of the founders of Maria Mitchell Association, has created a rare, modest individual of considerable charm.

The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Albertson of Philadelphia, both birth-right Quakers, Mrs. Shurrocks looks back to her early strict up-bringing with pride tinged with affectionate amusement. She remembers a slight rebellion over home influences when her best girl friend was allowed to wear a brighter and bigger ribbon on her hair than a narrow picot-edged brown one which bound her own hair. Laughingly she compares that minor tension to that endured by a girl cousin, also a birth-right Quaker, who still had to wear the traditional Quaker bonnet. "Our parents were certainly strict in bringing me and my sister up, yet compared to other Friends of the period they were liberal and often wisely tolerant. We never wore the bonnets."

Mrs. Shurrocks' mother was the daughter of Peleg Mitchell, brother to William, the father of Maria Mitchell. About 1873, grandfather Peleg bought the house on Vestal street from his brother and his three daughters,

who grew up to become Mrs. Albertson, Mrs. Charles S. Hinchman and Miss Eliza R. Mitchell, were all born there. Peleg Mitchell was an Island tinsmith working with James Austin in a shop on Main street about where the First National Store is now.

Thus, it was usual for Mrs. Shurrocks to spend Summers visiting her grandparents, frequently accompanied by her mother. During one of these vacations the little girl first spied the house which has since become her home. She told her mother that someday she would like to live in it and the quiet reply lingers with her still. "Someday perhaps thee will."

### Attended Island Schools

The daughter's education was quite different from her mother's for Mrs. Albertson attended two Nantucket schools, well-known in other years. They were John Boodle's School on Orange street and another run by Miss Hepzibah Hussey. It was while teaching at the Friends School in Germantown, Pa., that the young Nantucket woman met her husband, the son of the principal.

The daughter, however, attended only the Friends Select School in Philadelphia from which she graduated in 1897. After a one-year post graduate course at the same institution she went on to Bryn Mawr, graduating in 1902 with a B.A. in German and Latin.

There must have been times during her college senior year when Mrs. Shurrocks found it difficult to concentrate for the dream of her mother and of her aunt, Mrs. Hinchman, was slowly maturing into fact. The Maria Mitchell House, willed to Mrs. Hinchman, by her mother was chartered in 1902 and opened to the public for the first time the Summer of 1904. Mrs. Shurrocks became assistant curator while her mother took over the work of curator.

Looking back over the intervening 46 years, Mrs. Shurrocks recalled the original plan for the Maria Mitchell Association. Mrs. Albertson and Mrs. Hinchman agreed that a small beginning with the Memorial House as the center might more rapidly grow into permanency than a top-heavy organization. According to Mrs. Shurrocks' recollection, her mother stated the aims this way.

"We must never try to compete with the larger memorials of a similar type on the mainland. We must make this a Nantucket foundation for the development of the natural sciences on the Island, a living memorial to Maria Mitchell."

Mrs. Shurrocks recalled the carefully laid plans for that first Summer. Assistant curator of the infant project, Mrs. Shurrocks began with only a few specimens to build slowly the present complete picture of nature life on the Island, now housed in Hinchman House. Mrs. Albertson donated a dozen books on the sciences which were shelved in the living-room of the Maria Mitchell House. This she proudly called "The Library." The present red brick library directly across the narrow street developed directly from that original shelf.

### Sponsored Lecturers

The speakers that first year, Mrs. Shurrocks said, were Miss Mary Whitney, professor of Astronomy at Vassar and successor to Maria Mitchell; Miss Annie J. Cannon, Harvard Observatory assistant and S. N. F. Sanford, now retired but at one time in the Boston Museum of Natural History, who lectured on botany.

Two Nantucket boys took a lively interest in the new project Mrs. Shurrocks said, as well as Miss Grace Brown Gardner. The boys, Horace Marks and Franklin Webster, collected butterflies, birds eggs and various oddments of nature. These with the help of Mrs. Albertson and Mrs. Shurrocks they examined under a microscope and verified in the "library." Miss Gardner, aroused to a renewed interest in the nature life she had always enjoyed, passed directly from the enthusiastic influence of Mrs. Albertson to Brown University where she took her master's in nature work.

Mrs. Shurrocks' years of teaching at the Friends Select School were broken into by trips to England and the continent. She paid several visits to the English home of her sister, Mrs. J. Wilbur Tierney, whose husband manufactures pneumatic tools, and spent one Winter in Germany.

One Fall returning from a brief trip to Nova Scotia, she met Alfred F. Shurrocks, architect in charge of restoring the Jethro Coffin house to its former condition. That was in 1927. Two years later, they were married and returned to the Island to live at 16 Vestal street.

Recalling many of the Nantucket homes designed and built by her husband who died in 1945,

Mrs. Shurrocks spoke of "Dionis," now owned by Gilbert Verney of Dedham, and the houses of W. F. Armstrong, Mrs. Eagleson Robb, Mr. and Mrs. William Voorneveld in Starbuck Court and Miss Marian Green at Quaise.

Among the old houses restored, she mentioned among others the home of the Rev. George P. Christian in which Mr. Shurrocks removed three smaller fireplaces, one built on top of the other, only to find the original nine-foot one behind them all.

### Couple Shared Hobbies

Fortunately Mrs. Shurrocks' husband shared in her great hobby—her love of the outdoors. Together, they walked for miles, exploring, examining and discussing the ever-changing face of nature and her infinite children. Especially interested in bird life, they "shot" many an effective picture with their camera of gulls in flight, of rare Island birds and of nests and fledglings. Bringing back specimens of wild flowers, they started a wild flower garden to discover how many plants would adapt to changed conditions.

Some of those specimens have only come to fruitful maturity during the last few years. Transplanted beach plum trees are bearing their small purple fruit. The low-lying, star-shaped stork's bill is in its first year of conspicuous bloom. Over a grassy slope it spread a patch of magenta purple. Of Nantucket's 17 varieties of golden rod, 13 flourish in the wild flower garden.

A feeding station built in the back yard of their grounds attracted hungry birds during the severe Winter of 1929, especially a hurt gull which the Shurrocks called "Lamey." "Lamey" returned with his "gang" to feed on bacon and suet for six consecutive years and this so interested the couple they wrote a record of the gull and his flock. A copy of it is now in the library of the Maria Mitchell Association.

Left alone by the death of her husband in 1945, Mrs. Shurrocks courageously adjusted to her loss. She turned to her church, St. Paul's Episcopal, finding com-

fort in working as a member of the rector's advisory council, in the Church Service Guild, in the Sunday School and, this year, in the newly organized Women's Society which plans a year-round progressive program.

She is also a member of the Nantucket Historical Association, the Maria Mitchell Association, the Coffin School Association, the Nantucket Civic League and a charter member of the Nantucket chapter of the United World Federalists.

Mrs. Shurrocks' pattern of contented living exemplifies perhaps better than any other the two strands of orthodox Quakerism, at one time a powerful influence on the Island, and a revised forward-looking attitude toward people and events. With complete understanding of her own aims, she keeps her mind busy with future projects, yet maintains a steady respect for the fundamental principles, too frequently called old-fashioned.

Petticoat Row salutes her, not only for her relatively close relationship to Maria Mitchell but for her courage and vision.

May 28, 1948

## Memorial to Mrs. Albertson is Suggested.

The following paragraph appeared in the columns of "Science" recently:

"Mrs. Mary A. Albertson died on August 19 at the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Memorial, where she had been Librarian and Curator for ten years. To her much of the success of the Memorial is due. While the Astronomical work and the Observatory received her faithful attention, she early organized a botanical department. Having been associated with Professor Mitchell in earlier days, she knew her great love for flowers and worked to collect a complete herbarium of Nantucket flora (native and introduced). It is gratifying to report that she lived to see this nearly completed."

To this account may be added the interesting fact that specimens, many of them daily, were brought to the Memorial. These were labeled with botanical and common name, and this department became a Mecca to which flowers were brought for identification. Some of the members who have followed Mrs. Albertson's work during the ten summers when her activity was apparent, have proposed that some permanent memorial to her should be created.

See complete under S.H. House

## Margaretta S. Hinchman.

Miss Margaretta Shoemaker Hinchman, painter and illustrator, daughter of the late Charles S. Hinchman and of Lydia Swain (Mitchell) Hinchman, who was the founder of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association, died in Washington, Connecticut, in her eightieth year on July 23, 1955.

A memorial service will be held at her home in Gladwyne, Penn., in the fall.

July 1955



## William Mitchell,

Life of William Mitchell, astronomer whom she described as "one of the great men of Nantucket" and a "jack-of-all-trades" was related in interesting detail by Miss Helen Wright, biographer of Maria Mitchell, at the annual meeting of the Nantucket Historical Association Tuesday afternoon.

Miss Wright is the author of the recent book, "Sweeper Of The Sky" on the life of Maria Mitchell, the Island's famed astronomer and daughter of William Mitchell. She was the principal speaker on the program.

### Was Influential Townsman

Threading the life of William Mitchell, who was born in Nantucket Dec. 20, 1791, Miss Wright said he was one of the most influential members of this flourishing town in the early and middle 19th century.

"I could tell you many things of the life this remarkable man whose fame was to spread far beyond his Island home. Some day I hope that a real biography may be written. Today we can touch on only a few of those accomplishments which, as he writes, included the following:

"A cooper, a soap boiler, an oil and candle manufacturer, a farmer, a schoolmaster, an insurance broker, a surveyor, a chronometer rater, an astronomical observer for the Coast Survey, Justice of the Peace, Executor of Wills and Administrator of Estates, Writer of Wills, deeds and other instruments, Cashier of a Bank, Treasurer of a Savings Bank, and without emolument a member and for some years President of the Board of Trustees of the Nantucket Atheneum—a member and for many years Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Coffin School. For many years Chairman of the Committee for the Superintendence of the Observatory of Harvard College. Clerk at two different periods of the Nantucket Monthly Meeting of Friends, once for ten and once for five years."

"If anyone ever deserved the title 'jack-of-all-trades' it was William Mitchell. Yet it would be a grave mistake to add the rejoinder, 'but master of none.'"

### Accomplished Astronomer

"For William Mitchell was, as we shall see, recognized as an accomplished astronomer by the leading astronomers of the day. In his native town he became known as William the Teacher because of that ability to inspire others which spread also into the field of lecturing. His political activities beginning with the Constitutional Convention of 1820 made his a familiar figure in Boston and nearly took him to Washington. His part in the Friends meetings was great, his share in the banking and insurance cultural activities of the town invaluable. He was the father of ten children, two of them destined to become famous."

### Tribute to the late William Mitchell.

We are permitted to lay before our readers the following beautifully sympathetic tribute to the late William Mitchell, taken from a letter written by the late Nathaniel Barney to his children here soon after Mr. Mitchell's death. Its publication seems the more appropriate now from the fact that Mr. Barney's own pure spirit has since then taken its departure, and that we may believe him to be once more in communion with the friend whose loss he deeply lamented:

Yesterday the family went to the gathering, or anniversary at Vassar College—the birth-day commemoration of its Founder.

The occasion was interesting, but not to be compared with that of the preceding year, when two genial spirits gave such an interest to it, as no others may ever hope to inspire: I allude to Matthew Vassar and William Mitchell. The former I never met, but the latter had been my contemporary, my intimate companion and friend, through many years of my life; and the striking incidents of these years had been rendered the more deeply impressive, from the several changes in our outward relations, and the fact that after the allotted years of man, we should again be brought together in this beautiful locality, where in the grateful surroundings of Vassar College, the final separation took place between him and his own beloved Maria, whose right it will be ever hereafter, to live over in cherished memory, the untiring devotion, and ever wakeful affection, which so bound her to her father, that it seemed to us all, as if the happiness of one was inseparable from that of the other! What a power there is in family affection! O! how it sanctifies and blesses the severest trials and bereavements incident to our pilgrimage here!

There had been a pleasant, and yet in one view a sad association, or I may almost say, foreboding, in connection with this relative, and also with dear cousin Lucretia Mott, the former being twenty months my elder, and the latter three days younger than myself; but those impressions are oft-times unmeaning, and I forego any further expression.

Some of our family had been over on Seventh day to Vassar, and Maria ran out to the carriage, and in a few expressive words, as mother said, told the visitors of her dear father's condition. On First day no one went out to meeting, and our pressing cares at home, and the impression that William would yet live a little longer, quieted all apprehension of so early a departure, and, strange as it may seem, we knew nothing of the event till the daily paper of Fourth day told us he passed away on Second day evening. It was too late for us to offer the first aid or kindness, which our hearts would have prompted, and my own feelings were so awakened that he should have died, and actually that the family had left for Nantucket, without any expression of aid and sympathy from either of us—all this overpowered me, and I could not write, (nor have I yet had the privilege) one line in commemoration of the love I bore him, and the estimate I had of his life and character.

The foregoing may serve as an answer somewhat to the kind expression you make, that no tribute had come from my pen; and I think you will accord with me, that there are times when the heart can only make its offering, in that fullness of feeling which finds no utterance in words!

To me the transition was very sudden, and as I mused upon the change, I sought for the letter the deceased wrote to me just before his and Maria's most agreeable visit to our family in Yonkers, in which, after moralizing a little upon the changes which had, in our advanced years, given us a residence upon the Hudson, he said—"I have no desire again to make Nantucket my residence, and yet when my life is ended, I wish that that spot may be my last resting place."

That wish was granted for the body, and the spirit which was always so genial to all, and especially to the young (and of which the inmates of Vassar now bear such grateful and loving testimony) has centered, we trust, in that Divine Life and Being, that "Christ of God" which, from its ever indwelling presence, gives to man his highest and holiest inspiration and joy!

How glad I was that so many of his interesting and beloved family could, in his closing moments, witness and enjoy with Maria that overshadowing, peaceful serenity, which so sanctifies and hallows such a bereavement, and is one of the best evidences that—"Death is swallowed up in victory."

Jan 25, 1870

MARY A. ALBERTSON,

GENEALOGIST

P. O. Box 762, Nantucket, or  
3940 Brown St., Philadelphia, Pa.

o29 eow 3t 1p

Nov. 12, 1904

DEATH OF HON. WILLIAM MITCHELL.—We are called upon to record the decease of our former townsman, Hon. William Mitchell, who died at Vassar College Observatory, Poughkeepsie, on the 19th inst., aged 77 years. He was a native and until within a few years past, a resident of this town, and filled the office of Cashier of the Pacific Bank for about a quarter of a century. He represented Nantucket in the Legislature, and was once a member of the Executive Council. He was also for many years one of the Overseers of Harvard University, and Chairman of the Committee on the Observatory. It is but a small tribute to his character to say that he was a most estimable citizen, and filled every responsible position to which he was called with credit and fidelity.

The following notice, which appears in the Poughkeepsie Eagle, is a beautiful tribute in recognition of Mr. Mitchell's personal virtues and distinguished attainments:

OBITUARY.—Mr. William Mitchell, father of Miss Maria Mitchell, died at Vassar College Observatory yesterday at sunset, (April 19,) at the age of 77. Mr. Mitchell had during his life held many eminent positions and places of trust in the State of Massachusetts where he had resided continuously up to the time of his removal with his daughter to this city, at the opening of the College. He has been a resident here long enough to be known and loved as one of the purest spirits ever classed among men. Seventy-seven years among men and yet absolutely unstained. He passed away with the sun.

Apr. 24, 1869

LECTURE.—The lecture of William Foster Mitchell at Atheneum Hall on Monday evening was attended by about one hundred persons only. It was well worthy of a large audience; the subject matter of it consisting of reminiscences of the lecturer's adventures and experiences in Tennessee, while connected with the Freedmen's Bureau, during the last years of the war. His "Partner in the Grocery Business" was a blue-eyed mulatto, who had been known as a "hard case," but who developed into something better under proper management, and, being treated as a man, tried to be a man. The lecture contained an interesting sketch of life at the colony of New Bethel, with many anecdotes of the freedmen, and was well spiced with humor, while at the same time teaching noble purposes, and illustrating sound, practical work in a great cause.

The lecture was generously volunteered by Mr. Mitchell for the benefit of the fund of the Relief Association. As usual, it was not easy to draw a large audience together for a lecture, after the winter season is past, and the receipts do not amount to a great sum.

COAST SURVEY.—Orders have been sent to the officers of the Coast Survey to resume their work on the Mississippi river, and to continue the triangulation of that section. Special instructions have been given to conduct these operations in future in furtherance to the objects of the Mississippi River Commission. Professor Henry Mitchell, who represents the Coast Survey on that commission, and who has been associated with Gen. Humphreys and other officers of engineers on all important commissions involving harbor and river surveys, will give his especial attention to the operations of this service. The section to be surveyed lies between Donaldson, La., and Helena, Ark.

1872

### Obituary.

Francis M. Mitchell, at one time assistant cashier of the Pacific Bank of this town, and one of Chicago's most prominent produce merchants, died on the morning of the 2d inst., of heart disease at his home, No. 41, Sixteenth street, Chicago, at the age of 69. Mr. Mitchell went to Chicago thirty-five years ago, when, in connection with Mr. Wing, he established the produce commission firm of Wing & Mitchell, with a store on South Water street near La Salle. Until the fire this was one of the few large firms in the produce business in that city. Since the fire Mr. Mitchell has been associated with B. P. Hutchinson in various capacities, but principally as broker on the Board of Trade. He was one of the oldest members of the Board. His wife, Mrs. Ellen Mitchell, was a member of the Chicago Board of Education until her resignation last spring. Mr. Mitchell was everywhere known as a man of studious habits, a great reader, and versed in almost every branch of science. Maria Mitchell, the celebrated astronomer, was his sister.

The remains were brought to Nantucket Thursday, and interred the following day in Prospect Hill Cemetery.

Aug. 8, 1891

PERSONAL.—Miss Fanny Macy, who has been studying art for the past two winters with Gangengigh, in this city, is the niece of Prof. Maria Mitchell, the astronomer. She has recently made what is said to be an excellent portrait of her distinguished aunt. Miss Macy spends her summers in Nantucket, where there is much to employ her in the abundant picturesque sketching material.—Boston Sunday Herald.

July 1, 1882

Two women were elected members of the school board in Newton, Tuesday, two in Chelsea, and two in Cambridge. One of the women elected in the last-named city was Mrs. Phebe M. Kendall, daughter of the late Hon. William Mitchell, of this town.

Dec. 6, 1879

### Pleasant Words From Mrs. Hanaford.

Editor of The Inquirer and Mirror:  
I thank you for the welcome calendar, with its Nantucket pictures. I sent it at once to my granddaughter, Maria Mitchell Hanaford Feasel (who was born on Nantucket while her father was pastor of the North Congregational Church) and who is pleased with every reminder of the dear old island. "When my ship comes in" I mean to spend my summers where I can visit the Atheneum, the churches and other dear haunts of my earlier days, and sometimes listen to the voice of the surf at 'Sconset, while I view the moonlight on "the vast and lonely sea." My memories of Nantucket are holy, sweet and precious. God prosper you with the ever-welcome "Inquirer and Mirror" and the delightful "Nantucket Calendars." God help every son and daughter of the dear old island!

Yours gratefully,  
Phebe A. Hanaford,  
North Tonawanda, N. Y.

Jan. 6, 1915

July 28, 1949



## An Astronomical Garret.

By Anne Mitchell Macy.

"Aunt Anne," said my little niece, Polly, one day, "was your attic at the old house full of wonderful things when you were a little girl?"

"Our attic! do you mean our garret? There were no attics in the days when I was young! Yes," I continued, "our garret was full of wonderful things. I can truly say no garret was ever like our garret. Except the combined flavor of salt-fish and herbs of various kinds, the air of our garret was unlike that of any which I visited—though their name was legion; for all the school-girls whom I knew introduced me to this apartment in their respective houses, as the one place of freedom. Not a chest do I remember in our garret, not an old desk, not an old chair; yet my garret was the loveliest one to play in that ever was heard of."

"Because it was empty?" queried little Polly.

"It was crowded full! Your grandfather, who was my father as well, was an astronomer. Everything like a telescope, sextant, chronometer, etc., had its proper place in shed or closet of suitable nature—or on the top of the house, on an outside walk. Your grandfather, when a young man, had given courses of lectures upon his favorite topics; that was long before my day; before there were orreries or any of the modern facilities by which to illustrate the phenomena of the heavens. Consequently his diagrams were home-made; but as the age progressed and science was a little more recognized, the home-made matters were stowed away under the eaves.

"These diagrams were made of white cotton cloth—a good background to represent space. In the centre of one of these large pieces of cloth was the sun, made of orange-colored flannel, pinked and pointed around the circumference to give it a sparkling appearance, as of rays. A narrow black braid at a suitable distance from this gorgeous orb, and surrounding it, represented the path of Mercury; the little planet itself was represented as being now nearer the sun, now farther off, by means of bits of yellow flannel sewed to the braid here and there. Another black braid, nearly parallel to the former, had Venus at various stages of new-moon-ism, first-quarter, etc.; Venus was made from blue broad-cloth. Our Earth in black, the little Asteroids in purple, Mars in blood-red, Jupiter, Saturn and Uranus, respectively, in gray, drab and brown, were all running a race on these parallel braids.

"Of these, and similar curtains we found many in disuse, rolled together under the roof. Also, rolling around the garret, were to be met enormous balls of hard-wood, once used by the lecturer to illustrate the axes, poles, etc., of the different worlds; these spheres were, in some cases, six inches in diameter, in others, a foot. One, for instance, representing our Earth, was painted white, a wire running through the shortest diameter to represent the axis, and extending some three or four inches beyond the poles, to

make it easy to handle when held up to the audience. Saturn was a yellow ball, very imposing looking, because of the flat tin rings looking like two brims of a hat got loose from the crown and pushed up midway; a short distance from the ball, however, a little wire kept these rings in their proper places as regards the planet and each other. Jupiter was a green globe with very black belts. All of these planets in their sundry and irregular places, rolling over the garret, might seem to make the walking hazardous, but we were always on the lookout as a matter of habit.

"Under the roof, one day, my brother pulled forth a long strip of painted wood, on which in large black letters beautifully printed were the words:

"'An Undevout Astronomer is Mad.'"

"It was Saturday afternoon, a stormy Saturday afternoon, and he and I, unendurable in the 'living-room,' had been sent to the garret, where we had determined upon building a steamboat. The Undevout Astronomer, as a central mast, nailed to a crossbeam, just reached the floor. The diagrams, four in number, gathered around the top of the 'Undevout,' and secured with a piece of braid torn from the Earth's orbit, fell in draperies to the floor, serving as a steamboat awning. A portion of a whale's vertebral column, no unusual appurtenance to a Nantucket garret, formed a seat and helped to stay the floating cloth, while Jupiter and Saturn and the Earth and the little Asteroids by their respective weights kept the sides of the awning. It was a comely thing to look upon and we were proud of our work. Night overtook us, so we planned to meet therein the next day, Sunday, and have a quiet sitting.

"The quiet took mightily, therefore were we allowed, with all due deference to the day of the week, to repair to the garret with our books. In order to overlook this quiet, our mother in her wisdom, mistaken though it proved to be, bade us leave the garret-door ajar, she herself leaving the stairway door of the next lower flight wide open into the living-room, where the older members of the family were gathered in their Sunday garb, and the baby at rest in the cradle.

"It was not often that this house was so peaceful, but the steamboat had thus far proved the blessed peace-maker. My brother and myself had not spoken, and it is doubtful whether a word of the books, held in our left hands according to the school law, had received a glance from the respective owners, so well satisfied were we with our surroundings. Suddenly a draught moved one of the diagrams; the braid which, as you remember, was taken from the Earth's orbit, gave way and sent Mars, which had lost the protruding part of its axis, down the garret stairway, striking Jupiter as it went, and Saturn flew after Jupiter. The Asteroids, little pitchers with great ears, struck by the scene, rushed after the others to find out what the hue-and-cry meant, and the Earth brought up the rear. The garret door, ajar, was forced widely open, and, in some straggle way, Jupiter received a blow which threw him with tremendous velocity down the next flight of stairs.

"Bump, bump! whack, whack! came

Saturn tumbling after, whose rings seemed so many shrieking fiddles, while popping and hopping, like toy marbles, flew the little Vesta, Pallas, Juno and Ceres, distractedly aiming everywhere. All finally met in a group at the feet of our father—and he taking his Sunday nap.

"We have roused the neighbors," said my brother.

"The sequel I will not tell you, Polly. But among the elder children sitting in the living-room that memorable Sunday, was your aunt, Maria Mitchell, afterwards Professor of Astronomy at Vassar College. Who knows what work those rolling planets began in their sublime ignorance!"

"Who knows?" said little Polly, with a giggle.

NOTE.—The house in which this little scene was enacted is now the property of The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association. The stairway, which formerly entered the living room through what is now a long closet, was removed by Mr. Mitchell.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1923

## Nantucket Colonist Leaves \$175,687

Special to The Standard-Times

NEW YORK, Dec. 30.—The estate of the late Charles Neal Barney, a Summer resident of Nantucket since 1926, attorney for the Nantucket Historical Society and president of the Maria Mitchell Association of Nantucket, was appraised by the New York State Transfer Tax Department at \$183,047 gross value, \$175,687 net.

His widow, Mrs. Maizie Blaikie Barney, and a daughter, Miss Virginia Barney, both of Scarsdale, N. Y., receive the entire estate.

Mr. Barney was a great-nephew of Maria Mitchell, the astronomer and teacher. He was also a member of the Society of Mayflower Descendants, the Newcomen Society, and the Pacific and University Clubs. He was vice-president, secretary and general counsel of the Worthington Pump and Machinery Corporation of New York. In 1916 he ran unsuccessfully for U. S. Representative from Massachusetts.

Born in Lynn, Mass., he had been mayor of Lynn in 1906 and 1907. He joined Worthington in 1918. His death came at the age of 73 at his Winter home, 15 Barclay Road, Scarsdale, on April 24, 1949.

1950



### Mrs. Charles S. Hinchman.

In the death of Lydia Swain (Mitchell) Hinchman Nantucket has lost a distinguished daughter, a true friend and a benefactor.

Mrs. Hinchman died at her home in Philadelphia, December 3, 1938. She was born at 1 Vestal street, Nantucket, on November 4, 1845, the youngest daughter of Peleg Mitchell, Jr., and Mary S. Russell. She attended Hepsibeth Hussey's school until she was sixteen, when she became a pupil teacher. Two years later she went to Philadelphia to teach in Miss Shipley's School.

In 1872 she married Charles S. Hinchman of Philadelphia. He also was a member of the Society of Friends and came of a long line of Quaker ancestry. They are survived by five children: two sons, C. Russell Hinchman of Bryn Mawr, Pa., and Walter S. Hinchman of Milton, Mass.; and three daughters, Mrs. I. La Boiteaux, Miss Margaretta S. Hinchman and Miss Anne Hinchman. There are nine grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Besides being a member and in some cases an officer of several patriotic, literary, historical, and charitable societies in Philadelphia, Mrs. Hinchman was a life member or patron of the many outstanding Nantucket institutions, in each of which she kept an active interest.

She was particularly concerned in the preservation of the birthplace of her cousin, Maria Mitchell, and with her sister, Mrs. Albertson, in the founding of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association.

In this Mrs. Hinchman showed from the start a desire to benefit Nantucket by creating a living memorial to Miss Mitchell. The existence and development of each department in turn, the Memorial House, the Natural Science Department, the Observatory, and the Library, are due largely to her vision, her help, and encouragement. But here, as in the case of other institutions, she kept herself as well as her gifts in the background, not allowing her name to be mentioned.

However, in addition to being naturally executive, her ability to master and visualize details has made her good judgment and advice valued and much sought after.

Mrs. Hinchman was interested also in genealogy. She was the author of several books: "The Early Settlers of Nantucket", which ran into two editions, and two delightful volumes of "Reminiscences", one of her husband and one of herself.

Everyone who had the good fortune to know Mrs. Hinchman was impressed with her gracious and kindly manner, her consideration for others, and her ability to bring out the best in all with whom she came in contact. In a word, she unconsciously inspired our love and admiration.

M. H.

Dec. 16, 1938

### OBITUARY.

For The Inquirer and Mirror.

**MACY.**—From the opening years of the century now drawing to a close, Nantucket has been pre-eminently distinguished for a helpful, intellectual, and highly cultivated type of womanhood. Among such women may honorably be enrolled the name of Anne Mitchell Macy, who died in Cambridge March 16, 1900, in the 80th year of her age. She was the daughter of Hon. William Mitchell, a noted astronomer of the island, and the widow of Alfred Macy, all of Nantucket. Among other accomplishments, the deceased was distinguished as a linguist, being well versed in seven languages. In her youth she was a teacher, at one time principal in the New Bedford High School for Girls, and later a teacher in the Coffin School at Nantucket. As vice-president of the Woman's Educational and Industrial Union, of Boston, she was active in good works. Her pen was frequently brought under contribution for papers and magazines, and any one who has read a poem which she wrote, called "Reasons—a True Story," would be charmed with the quality—the caristic flavor of her wit. Before her demise, by long years of confirmed invalidism she was "shut in" from that large circle, literary and intellectual, which she had so helped and ornamented in the prime of her career, before smitten by the hand of illness and prevented from activity in a broad sphere, where, through the brilliancy of her talents, she was calculated to shine. As her physical condition did not warp or eclipse her intellect, she was enabled to bear her confinement without a morbid consciousness of her many limitations, being able to meet her guests with smiles and words of cheer, making her sick room often a delightful trysting place for friends and kindred, and when at her best physically, for a host of admiring callers. As years rolled on and she was still secluded, she did not appear to experience an age of decrepitude and mental decay, but maintained her love for study, especially for classical literature, to the end of her life. To her it seemed a duty not to let the light of knowledge wane.

Could she speak from the bounds beyond, would she not say life is an entity which is not broken by what mortals call death? It persists, flows right on, and the pursuits which engage our time and attention on this side of the confines of existence may continue to interest all on the shores beyond.

She leaves a brother and two sisters and a large circle of loving friends, who may confidently congratulate her in having been assured

"On the cold cheek of Death smiles and roses are blending:  
That beauty immortal awakes from the tomb."

ANNA GARDNER.

Apr. 14, 1900

### Fifty Famous Nantucketers.

By Grace Brown Gardner.

21.

#### WILLIAM MITCHELL

1792—1869

William Mitchell is well known as the father of Maria Mitchell. He should be better known for his own attainments. Born in Nantucket in 1792 of Quaker parentage, he early manifested a deep interest in science, especially in mathematics and astronomy. He became a teacher, establishing a school on Howard street, and devoting his spare time to scientific investigation, frequently giving lectures on his favorite subject and illustrating them by means of apparatus which he himself invented.

When the town of Nantucket in 1827 decided to open a free public school William Mitchell was invited to take charge, first being allowed to visit similar institutions of New York and other cities. He organized the school upon the monitorial system, and commenced with two hundred pupils, four hundred having applied for admission. This first public school was opened in the old Town House on the corner of Main and Milk streets. On account of his health he was obliged to relinquish teaching after a few years and he engaged in various business enterprises. He never lost his interest in education, continuing as president of the trustees of the Coffin School.

At the time of the Great Fire of 1846 he was president of the Athenaeum. Much of the burden of the rebuilding and refurnishing of the Library devolved upon him. He was tireless in soliciting books from his many scientific and literary friends, and the volumes donated were stored in his residence until the new building was in readiness.

For many years he was cashier of the Pacific National Bank and the family occupied the apartment above the banking room, moving there from their Vestal street house. H

also served as the first treasurer of the Nantucket Institution for Savings. In addition to his work as computer for the Coast Survey, etc., he corrected chronometers for the whaling captains. The two stone pillars, one on the south side of the Pacific Bank and the other in front of the Fair street Museum were erected by him for use in determining the town's meridian line.

The first detailed map of Nantucket is known as the Mitchell Map and is a testimonial to his knowledge of surveying. The map is now a highly prized Nantucket item.

In 1820 he was sent as a delegate to the convention for revising the Constitution of Massachusetts, and was at one time a member of the State Senate, and for several years served on the Governor's Council.

As one of the Overseers of Harvard College and chairman of the Harvard Observatory Committee, he was in constant correspondence with eminent scientists in this country and in Europe, and was himself recognized as a scientist of wide attainments. Two of his children followed his footsteps: his daughter Maria, and his son Henry, who entered the Coast Survey and became a world authority as a civil engineer.

When his daughter Maria was appointed Professor of Astronomy at Vassar College, her father was invited by its founder, Matthew Vassar, to become the guest of the college as long as Professor Mitchell remained on the faculty. Here, free from all care, he spent the remainder of his life very happily, entering into the social life of the college as well as into the professional life of his daughter. The students were devoted to the benign old Friend who was an interested sharer of their varied interests.

According to his wishes William Mitchell was buried in Nantucket, where his grave may be seen beside that of his famous daughter and other members of his family.



A VIEW OF MAIN STREET SQUARE AND PACIFIC BANK A HALF CENTURY AGO.

March 1950



## Ancestors For Maria Mitchell.

By Robert J. Leach.

The publication of Helen Wright's "Sweeper in the Sky" has brought Nantucket's famous woman astronomer into national focus again. As a small consequence of this interest, I have taken it upon myself to write the following account of some of Maria Mitchell's ancestors in the early years of the 18th century.

In the latter years of the 19th century, Professor Maria Mitchell of the Dept. of Science at Vassar College is said to have observed that she claimed at least three thousand cousins on her native island of Nantucket. In truth the three thousand compassed the whole island population. As a matter of subsidiary interest to her sweeping statement, I have made a careful check of her ancestors in that place, and have listed those who stand five generations removed from the famous astronomer: in short, her great-great-great-grandparents. Altogether there are thirty-two possible progenitors in that generation, but not all were Nantucketers and some must therefore be rigorously excluded, as lesser beings, in brief, off-islanders. The rugged independence, integrity, and humor of the straight-forward scientist had much reason to be, considering the impressive array of personalities whom I seek to introduce.

Unfortunately there were no Nantucket Mitchells five generations before the astronomer. The Mitchells were then residents of Newport, R. I. We thus ignore summarily four of our possible 32 ancestors. Such cavalier treatment allows for presentation of the paternal line of the family into which the first Nantucket Mitchell did eventually marry. And appropriately enough, the family was the most distinguished Nantucket household both in the eyes of the world and of the Society of Friends on the Island.

Maria Mitchell's first great-great-great-grandfather on Nantucket was Nathaniel Starbuck, Sr., (1636-1719), richest landowner in the pioneer days, and founder of the whaling industry. His wife, Mary (Coffin) Starbuck, (1645-1717) was daughter of the magistrate Tristram Coffin, founder of the Friends Meeting, a powerful Quaker preacher and arbiter of the destiny of the island. The maternal branch of the Starbuck house was hardly less distinguished. Maria Mitchell's second great-great-great-grandfather on Nantucket was William Gayer (\*1640-1710), non-Quaker military captain during King William's War, and classical scholar. And his wife was Dorcas (Starbuck) Gayer (\*1645-1696), sister of the whale trade founder. After her premature death, William returned to England where he also departed this life, leaving a large inheritance to his Nantucket heirs.

The second Mitchell on Nantucket had married into the Cartwright family. The paternal line of the house presents us with one of the first whalemens, Sampson Cartwright (1677-1741), and his wife Bethiah (Pratt) Cartwright (1680-1741). Neither were Friends, though his mother had been a member. Her grandfather was the Peter Folger who was the first preacher (Baptist) on the island. And Bethiah was thereby naturally first cousin to Benjamin Franklin. The maternal side of this connection was less respectable. Triple-great-grandfather Dr. Joseph Brown (\*1675-1715) skipped town to become a pirate. His deserted wife Tabotha (Trott) Brown (1679-1749) was disowned from Quaker Meeting for bigamy when she ran off to Newport, R. I., with a second husband from that place. Through her aunt (her father's sister) she was a first cousin of Sampson Cartwright.

The Cartwright grandson of the above four representatives of the Cartwright house married into the great Nantucket family of Macy. The paternal line of the Macys brings us to observe Maria Mitchell's triple great-grandfather by the name of Thomas Macy (1687-1759), grandson of the patriarch-founder of Nantucket, who went by that name. The grandson was good with figures: treasurer of meeting, town, county, and the Starbuck-Macy whaling enterprises. His wife Deborah (Coffin) Macy (\*1685-1760) was the first Nantucket Friend to rate a public memorial at Yearly Meeting in Newport, R. I., as an outstanding spiritual personality. Through her father, Deborah was niece to the great Mary Starbuck, and through her mother she was grand-niece of the whaling founder, Nathaniel Starbuck, and as well to his sister, Dorcas Gayer. When we turn to the maternal side of the Macy connection, we meet more of the prolific Coffin family. The astronomer's great-great-great grandfather in this case was Richard Coffin (1694-1768), whaling captain and consistent Friend. He was a great-nephew of Mary Starbuck, and first-cousin once-removed of Deborah Macy, the respected elder. Through their mothers, who were sisters, Richard Coffin was also a first cousin of Thomas Macy, the younger. Their common grandmother, Sarah (Shattuck) Gardner, was the first friend to reside on Nantucket, and her father, their great-grandfather, Samuel Shattuck, represented the King's Missive to the Governor of Massachusetts Bay, thereby stopping the hanging of Quakers on Boston Common in 1659. Richard Coffin's wife was Ruth (Bunker) Coffin (\*1700-1779), great-granddaughter of the original owner of Beacon Hill in Boston, first cousin of Treasurer Thomas Macy, grand-niece of the ubiquitous Mary Starbuck, first cousin once-removed from the sweet-spirited Deborah Macy, and naturally

first cousin to her husband. It's no wonder that the Vineyarders despaired of having a really competent jury empaneled on Nantucket, so ingrown were the family relationships.

With the completion of the four Macy ancestors (and incidentally their kinship ramifications), we have taken account of twelve persons; totalling all the Nantucket ancestors of William Mitchell in this generation. For the sake of clarity the names are here recapitulated: Nathaniel and Mary Starbuck; William and Dorcas Gayer; Sampson and Bethiah Pratt; Joseph and Tabotha Brown; Thomas and Deborah Macy; and Richard and Ruth Coffin. Seven were Friends. Five were not. Through her father's people, Maria Mitchell was descended four ways from magistrate Tristram Coffin, three ways from the original Starbuck stock, two ways from the founder of Nantucket, Thomas Macy, and as well two ways from Samuel Shattuck, first "publisher of Truth" in New England. Peter Folger was her one other distinguished Nantucket ancestor, through her father.

Maria Mitchell's mother had been a Coleman, the founder of which family explored Nantucket before it was settled by white men. As we turn to the sixteen maternal ancestors five generations back, we begin naturally with the paternal line of the Coleman name. The figure we meet is John Coleman, Sr., (1644-1715), son of the original founder, a farmer in the pioneer days chiefly active in establishing the sheep raising industry which his father introduced from Chilmark in old England. His wife, Joanna (Folger) Coleman (\*1650-1719), was a daughter of the great Peter Folger, and as such she and John Coleman supported the Democratic party in the bloodless revolution. The maternal Colemans lead us to another Folger line. In this case Joseph Pratt (\*1650-1710) had wed Dorcas (Folger) Pratt (\*1655-1710), another of Peter's daughters. Apparently they removed from the island after the difficulties of King Philip's War had subsided, returning to an original north shore homestead. Parenthetically, Joseph and Dorcas were parents of Bethiah (Pratt) Cartwright, who in her own right was a triple great-grandmother of Maria Mitchell—but on the paternal side of the house.

John Coleman's grandson by that surname had married into the Myrick family, which name however extended back only to the girl's father. Consequently we discover no Myrick ancestors five generations back, but only the parents of the woman whom that original Myrick married. They were Pinkhams. Jonathan Pinkham (1684-1735) was a weaver, son of the first Pinkham on the island and through his mother a great-nephew of Mary Starbuck. His wife, Hannah (Brown) Pinkham (1689-1730), was apparently no kin of the physician turned pirate.

Rather she was descended of a respectable north shore family of Browns, who had married into the fire-eating lesser Gardner line, represented by Capt. John Gardner in the bloodless revolution. Hannah was, through her Gardner blood, second cousin to Richard Coffin and to Thomas Macy, the younger, both themselves triple-great-grandfathers on the paternal side of the family.

John Coleman's great-grandson (Maria Mitchell's grandfather) had married one of the numerous Folger family. Consequently we are next presented by triple-great-grandfather John Folger (1659-1732), a miller, inheritor of Peter Folger's estate and flair for learning, as well as the first Quaker we encounter on the distaff side of the house. His wife, Mary (Barnard) Folger (1667-1737), did not join the meeting. She was a daughter of the first Barnard on the island. John and Mary Folger's son married into the Gardner family. Her parents were Capt. Nathaniel Gardner (1665-1713), grandson of Samuel Shattuck, first minister to be recommended by Nantucket Monthly Meeting of Friends, and as well mercantile correspondent for Benjamin Franklin's father. He died in England while on a religious journey. His wife, Abigail (Coffin) Gardner (1666-1709) like Mary (Barnard) Folger never accepted the faith of her husband. Abigail Gardner's grave was the first in the old North Cemetery in Nantucket town. We are not surprised to learn she was niece to Mary Starbuck, and therefore aunt to Jonathan Pinkham.

John and Mary Folger's grandson (again Maria Mitchell's grandfather) had married a Barnard. The triple-great-grandfather in this case was Nathaniel Barnard, Sr. (1642-1718), father of Mary Folger herself, a wealthy farmer who lived down on the Hummock pond. His wife, Mary (Barnard) Barnard (\*1645-1718), was his first cousin. Nathaniel's son married a Hussey which brings us to the final great-great-great-grandparents to be considered. Pleasantly enough they are about the most colorful personalities of the period. Stephen Hussey (1630-1718) one of the first-born of the puritan experiment in Massachusetts, was a Barbados trader, lawyer of incurable contentiousness, and consequently disowned from Quaker Meeting a year before he died. Once he had been a respected elder. His wife Martha (Bunker) Hussey (1656-1744), aunt of Ruth (Bunker) Coffin, another triple great-grandmother was a strict Calvinist.

Having completed the circle of distaff ancestors, we recapitulate them as we did William Mitchell's forebears, as follows: John Sr. and Joanna Coleman; Joseph and Dorcas Pratt; Jonathan and Hannah Pinkham; John and Mary Folger; Nathaniel and Abigail Gardner; Nathaniel Sr. and Mary Barnard; and Stephen and Martha Hussey. They were a total of fourteen personalities, only three who were members of Friends Meeting. Through her



mother's people Maria Mitchell was descended two ways from magistrate Tristram Coffin, two ways from the original Gardner stock, two ways from the original Barnard strain, once from the first Coleman, once from the original Hussey, once from Samuel Shattuck, and three times from Peter Folger.

By way of summary we find that Maria Mitchell was a complex biological compound: six parts aristocratic Coffin, four parts democratic Folger, three parts executive Starbuck, three parts martyr Shattuck, two parts financial Macy, two parts calculating Gardner, two parts gentlewoman Barnard, one part plain Coleman, and one part scheming Hussey. Lest she be considered completely flawless, we must reluctantly recall the lesser strains—Cartwright, Brown, Pratt, Gayer (with apologies), and even off-island Myricks and Mitchells. That Maria Mitchell was disowned from Meeting is not too surprising considering that only twelve of her twenty-six triple-grandparents in a self-consciously historically minded community were actually members of the Society of Friends, and two of them were the only two Friends disowned in the first century of the Meeting's history.

\* Approximate date.

March 4, 1950

## Inquirer and Mirror.

Guaranteed Circulation. 1350 Copies.  
NAMED ON HER MERITS.

MRS. ELLEN M. MITCHELL APPOINTED AS A MEMBER OF THE CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION.

When the members of the board of education gather together to-morrow night, there will be a woman among them—a real live specimen of the so-called weaker sex. Yielding to the pressure brought to bear on him, Mayor Roche has appointed Mrs. Ellen M. Mitchell to take the place of one of the members whose term has just expired.

Two years ago the Women's club petitioned Mayor Harrison to put a woman on the board, but the mayor never saw fit to recognize the claims of the petitioners. When Roche was elected the attack was begun with renewed vigor. Roche was afraid to comply with the request at the time, being so new in office and having so many friends of Mr. Davis to provide for. He said, however, that when the next term expired he would see that the women were recognized. He said he would be glad to see five women on the board, providing they were made of the right stuff.

As the time drew near the Women's club selected the names of Mrs. Ellen M. Mitchell and Mrs. Charles Henrotin and presented them for the mayor's consideration, with a petition setting forth the claims of women in general and of their candidates in particular. They pointed to the fact that women successfully served on the school boards of Boston, Philadelphia, London, and New York; that there were 1,384 female and 56 male teachers in the Chicago schools, and that it was not right that the interests of these women should be wholly trusted to men. The work of the nineteen standing committees of the board is such as would be greatly benefited and expedited by the help and counsel of women members.

The club had plenty of other names it might have urged, but it did not wish Mayor Roche to draw entirely from its selection. As it was, he has up to date only selected one of the two names, although he may choose Mrs. Henrotin before the next council meeting. With Mrs. Carse on the County, and Mrs. Mitchell on the City board of education, the women of Chicago think they see the beginning of better days, especially when they know that the selection of these women was made upon their own merits, and was not due to any political influence, such as secure the appointment of most of the members.

Mrs. Mitchell is the wife of Mr. Frank M. Mitchell, an old board of trade man, and one of "Old Hutch's" lieutenants. She is a native of Nantucket island, where her father, Joseph Mitchell, was a man of considerable prominence, having been member of both houses of legislature and auditor of the state. Through her mother, a Miss Folger, she is a lineal descendant with Benjamin Franklin and Lucretia Mott, of old Peter Folger, the sage of Nantucket. Maria Mitchell, the astronomer, late of Vassar, is a sister of Mrs. Mitchell's husband, and her own cousin. Dr. Clifford Mitchell, professor of chemistry, in the Chicago Homeopathic Medical college, is a son of Mrs. Mitchell, and Dr. J. S. Mitchell, the president of that school, is her brother. Mrs. Mitchell has been interested in educational affairs and the advancement of women all her life, speaking and writing in their interests whenever she has had an opportunity. As far back as 1880 she was vice president with Miss Doggett, of the Illinois Association for the Advancement of Women. She was for several terms on the directory of the Erring Women's refuge, and later still edited the journal of that institution. She has been associated with Miss Doggett in many movements for the advancement of her sex and of education, always maintaining decidedly liberal and progressive opinions in those matters. She is one of the charter members of the Fortnightly club, having helped to start that very excellent organization. In religion she is a Swedenborgian; in politics she is for the party which will admit women to equal suffrage with men. She was one of the principal onlookers at the recent women's congress at Washington. Mrs. Mitchell's lectures on "George Sand," "The Troubadour," and other subjects have given her considerable reputation on the platform, and through her constant writing on educational topics, she has been recognized in the field of letters, as a woman of advanced theories and original ideas.

"I have no ideas to express in advance," she said, referring to her appointment. "My candidacy for the position was simply in the form of having my name brought forward by the educational committee of the Women's club. I have not yet been officially notified of my appointment, but even if I had I could not say more than I have done. I am grateful to the Women's club, and to Mayor Roche for selecting me for the position. It is something that I prize very highly, for educational interests have been my study for many years. I will take my place in the board with no axe to grind and with no hobby to ride. I will simply try to do my duty as a member."

It is said that the men who compose the board are preparing to give Mrs. Mitchell a warm reception. That gifted and chivalrous orator, Millard B. Hecely, is intrusted with the duty of welcoming her with a gallant speech, and Graeme Stewart is to have charge of the flowers and the general reception. The members, it is said, will be much more particular about their dress. Smoking is to be prohibited at board meetings, and putting your feet on the desks is tabooed. The venerable Sheppard Johnson was seen yesterday, purchasing a box of paper collars and a butterfly necktie, and it was rumored around the city hall that Supt. Howland had given a boot-black a contract for a daily shine.

The changes in the board will, in all probability, strengthen the anti-German sentiment in that body, whether anything of the kind was intended or not. Mr. Nichoff, who was dropped, always championed that special study, and in disposing of him it is believed that the cause of popular education has been advanced a pace in the schools. In the removal of Mr. Stensland, too, German loses one of its friends, while, on the other hand, it is not believed that it has gained a single advocate in the new appointments. It is natural to expect that the continuation of the study in the schools will be one of the early questions considered by the new board, and whether the opposition is found strong enough to discontinue it or not, it is certain that the anti-German sentiment is growing, and that it is only a matter of time when the example of St. Louis will be followed in the matter.

"Not one of the new appointees sought the position," said Mayor Roche yesterday, "which is without precedent, I think."

"Were any of them selected with a view to affecting the special studies?"

"Certainly not, for I have no idea how they stand on the subject."

"Did any of the old members seek reappointment?"

"Mr. Garvey's friends came to see me, but I did not hear from the others."

In the reorganization of the board the presidency will go to either F. W. Peck, or J. M. Clark, both of whose names are being canvassed in connection with the position.—The Chicago Times, July 27, 1888

Aug. 18, 1888

COMPLIMENTARY TO A DAUGHTER OF NANTUCKET.—The Chicago Globe of the 10th inst., thus speaks of a former townswoman, who is one of the candidates for election to the school board of that city:

Mrs. Ellen Mitchell, who is well known as having, with Mrs. Kate Doggett, founded the Fortnightly, one of the most prominent and exclusive women's clubs in America, and also through her active work for many years for the Erring Women's refuge, comes from a long line of scholarly, public-spirited men and women, of which she is no unworthy representative. She was born on the island of Nantucket, and her father was Hon. Joseph Mitchell, who was at different times a member of both houses of the legislature, and later auditor of the state of Massachusetts. His daughter asserts, with filial pride, that he was a man greatly honored, and that almost every dispute of the quaint islanders was referred to him for arbitration, and also that he was president of the Coffin school, and chairman of the public school committee to the end of his life. Through her mother, who was a Folger, Mrs. Mitchell is a lineal descendant, as were Benjamin Franklin, and Lucretia Mott, of Nantucket's famous sage, Peter Folger. Maria Mitchell, the renowned discoverer of comets and professor of astronomy at Vassar College, is a sister of Mrs. Mitchell's husband, and her own cousin. In speaking of this dual relationship, Mrs. Mitchell laughingly remarks that as "a good name is better than riches," and as she was always rather proud of her own name, she married a relative and did not change her name.

Dr. J. S. Mitchell, president of the Chicago Homeopathic Medical College is Mrs. Mitchell's brother, and her son, Dr. Clifford Mitchell, is professor of chemistry in the same school.

Mrs. Mitchell is at present editing the paper which is published in the interests of the Erring Woman's refuge, in addition to her duties as one of the directors of that institution. She is a woman of fine education and rare accomplishments, and has been a close student, not only of books but events, keeping well up with the trend of the times, and in selecting her for one of the candidates for appointment on the board of education, the ladies have chosen one who may be a valuable addition to the Chicago school board.

June 30, 1888

### OBITUARY.

Mrs. Ellen Mitchell, ex-member of the Chicago board of education, died Wednesday. She was born in Nantucket in 1832, and was a daughter of Joseph Mitchell. Her mother was a member of the Folger family, to which Benjamin Franklin belonged. In 1853 she married F. M. Mitchell, a brother of Maria Mitchell, the astronomer, and went to Chicago with her husband in 1859. His death occurred recently. Her remains were brought here for interment Saturday.

Dec. 24, 1891

### "Skipper" Paid a Visit to the Maria Mitchell Association.

Mrs. Charles Amey has presented the Maria Mitchell Association with a most interesting gift, the cage in which Skipper, cocker spaniel mascot of a war time sub-chaser, traveled across the continent in 1945. Skipper was given an honorable discharge from the Navy when he suffered the loss of a leg in the service of his country.

Mr. William Mitchell Amey, Skipper's master, and Skipper himself recently vacationed on the Island and visited Hinchman House to tell us the dog's interesting story. "Skipper was mascot of PC 797, a 176 foot sub-chaser, with a wartime complement of sixty men, including five officers," Mr. Amey began. "He arrived aboard ship in 1944 at the age of seven months and spent a year and a half guarding the ship and her men."

"His injury occurred while on gangway watch at midnight with two of he men. When a yard cat came aboard Skipper went after him to protect the gangway. The cat, wise in the ways of a busy Navy yard, evaded a

passing truck, but Skipper, having been limited to the small ship and unaware of the danger, ran directly under the wheels of the truck which smashed his lower left hind leg." At this point Skipper nuzzled his master's hand as though looking for sympathy while reliving the tale of heroism.

Stroking the dog's tawny ear, Mr. Amey went on, "Being a true sailor, Skipper made no outcry, but suffered in silence. The Commanding Officer was awakened by the watchman and lent his car to take the dog to Dr. Baker's Veterinary Hospital in Birmingham, Washington. After a few days in the hospital the leg was amputated and cut high so the stump would not get in his way. After two weeks in the hospital exercise pen Skipper spotted a baby rabbit and despite his infirmity he ran the rabbit down! Skipper was then sent to Nantucket to convalesce. He left Port Washington in his cage, traveling by Railway Express and arrived in Nantucket five days later."

"His cage bore two signs. The first read:

Skipper, mascot of a Navy sub-chaser who lost his leg while in service and is being invalided to the home of one of the crew. Please take care of him for us.

The Crew.

"Attached to the cage were the three area medals, for serving in the American, Asiatic and Pacific Zones. The other sign read:

Please don't feed me chicken and chop bones, potatoes or candy of any kind because they are not good for me.

Skipper.

"Skipper had his meals en route in a Navy bowl. He now lives in Hagerstown, Md., and is spry and healthy at the age of seven and a half."

When Mr. Amey finished his story Skipper indicated it was about time he went outside to sniff at his old cage. He was interested, but still the gentleman sailor as he made a few doggy remarks to the immature herding gull now occupying the cage. We explained to Skipper that one of the educational conservation projects of the Natural Science department is caring for injured birds that are later released to continue their useful lives on the Island. The present occupant had the tip of his wing shot off, despite the fact that gulls are at all seasons on the protected list.

Skipper's photograph, with his area medals, is on the Hinchman House bulletin board and we invite the public to inspect the portrait of a Navy gentleman, and the gift cage which again shelters an injured animal.

Emily Goode.

Sept. 1, 1951

### Margaretta S. Hinchman.

Miss Margaretta Shoemaker Hinchman, painter and illustrator, daughter of the late Charles S. Hinchman and of Lydia Swain (Mitchell) Hinchman, who was the founder of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association, died in Washington, Connecticut, in her eightieth year on July 23, 1955.

A memorial service will be held at her home in Gladwyne, Penn., in the fall.



### "Two Steps Down" Is Tale Of Quaker Childhood.

A little girl from Philadelphia came at the age of 11 to spend her first summer on Nantucket with Grandmother Mitchell. It was the Victorian Age, when things were different, and little Alice Albertson remembered how different they were all of her life. She knew that those summers on the island in the now-historic Maria Mitchell House made her "greatly favoured". And so Mrs. Alice Albertson Shurrocks, who became a year-round resident and a leader in intellectual circles, has created a delightful little book out of her childhood experiences.

Grandmother Mary lived the Quaker life of "austere simplicity and gracious purity". She had married Peleg Mitchell, the brother of William, father of the astronomically noted Maria. Though life was by rule and rote, it could be fun for an imaginative girl like Alice who saw the significance of things, be it one of Peleg's homemade tin dippers, and who thought about the little matters of life that some folks don't notice.

These things and these little matters make up the book and give it a nostalgic charm. A sparrow chirps and there is kinship with God. Two girls, Alice and Cousin Julia, sit down in the parlour while the elders talk sedately. Taking two steps down into each other's hearts after quiet examination they decided that they liked each other.

The flatirons stood on the hot lids of the coal range as Alexander Chase, the chore man, brought the drinking water from the pump across the way. Alice remembers the drops of coarse sugar glittering like snow crystals on the cookies, the whispering of the leaves on the old grape vine presaging a storm out Surfside way, the making of puddings with Irish moss gathered on the Wauwinet Beach.

Now and then, in the ancient tales with drama muted as the elders talked, the girls heard of how Cousin Maria had once surprised a young man trying to break into the Pacific Bank. Maria Mitchell let the man go on promise that he would go straight but with the threat that she would tell his name unless he did so. Years later Alice related the story to an old gentleman and he said dreamily, "She never had to tell the name."

By and large, Mrs. Shurrocks paints a many-sided picture of Old Nantucket in this 75-page volume printed by the Inquirer and Mirror Press. It often touches the soul and it comes from a heart that felt the experience of growing up and of other people growing old very poignantly indeed. As Edouard A. Stackpole says in a foreword, it shows us that "Nantucket has progressed in its material things but the spiritual values of its Friends

have not been improved upon." Illustrations by Ruth Haviland Sutton and original photographs by Freeman and J. W. Tierney admirably carry out the flavor of the grown-up's excursion two steps down and back to her Quaker childhood. Price: \$2.50.

Mrs. Shurrocks, whose home is at 16 Vestal Street, was born in Philadelphia, Penn., where she spent the winter months until she became an "all the year rounder" following her marriage to the well-known architect, Alfred Shurrocks. The daughter of Mary Ann (Mitchell) and Benjamin Albertson, she was a birthright member of the Society of Friends and attended Friends Select School in Philadelphia. Following her graduation and a subsequent post-graduate course from Friends Select, she received her A.B. degree from Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Penn. She returned to Friends Select to teach and later taught in Miss Cruice's School. (Miss Cruice is now Mrs. Edward Sturdevant, of 17 Liberty St.)

From 1904 on, Mrs. Shurrocks (Miss Albertson, then) was Assistant Curator, Curator and Director of Natural Science at the Maria Mitchell Association. During this time she wrote the little book "Nantucket Wildflowers", which is considered to be an authority on the wildflowers to be found on the island.

The idea of writing "Two Steps Down" came from Mrs. Shurrocks' cousin, Mrs. Thomas Drake, a great-granddaughter of Maria Mitchell, who said "You know things about the Maria Mitchell House, which no one else knows. You ought to write them down."

MAY 30, 1953

### Walter Swain Hinchman.

Walter Swain Hinchman, who died Wednesday, July 6, at his home in Milton, was one of Nantucket's sons.

His mother was a Mitchell, a cousin of the famous woman astronomer, Maria Mitchell. Among the many inheritances which Walter Hinchman possessed, the Mitchell traits of honest thinking, brilliant and witty repartee, and devotion to the universal were clearly evident.

Though born in Burlington, N. J., and giving the best of his life to teaching boys in Groton School and Milton Academy, Massachusetts, he devoted a large part of his thought and energy to the interests of the Maria Mitchell Association of Nantucket which was organized and endowed by his mother, Mrs. Lydia Swain (Mitchell) Hinchman.

Haverford College, Penn., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., and a period at the University of Berlin, Germany, were the educational institutions where he got his look at the universe. Probably from his own point of view, the universe was revealed to him more effectively by his many years of research in the backgrounds

of English literature and the adventure he had in helping boys to be captured by what captured him. To this should be added that much came to him from a few years as a contributing editor of Forum Magazine and from the writing of a dozen books and more than two dozen magazine articles and pamphlets on many literary subjects.

"It was during the years of teaching that 'there was a growing interest in writing' but the temptation to make writing his major was resisted because his teaching was more intriguing. He could not have been deaf to what was happening. Frederick L. Allen, editor of Harpers Magazine, writes: 'It was Walter Hinchman more than anybody else who got me interested in books'. Arthur B. Perry, headmaster of Milton Academy says: 'Students remember him for the opening of their minds and imaginations'.

But during all the years of his teaching, the Mitchell inheritance of loyalty to Nantucket, received from his mother, was constantly calling him to responsibilities which he added gladly to his already full life.

His mother, with the help of her sister, Mrs. Mary Ann (Mitchell) Albertson, had made plans to establish in Nantucket, a memorial to their celebrated cousin, Maria Mitchell. They wanted it to be a "living memorial" to aid in the advancement of science.

This desire took definite form by 1902 in the organization of the Maria Mitchell Association and the purchase of the house on Vestal Street where Maria was born. During the early years of the association, Mrs. Hinchman, as first vice-president (she refused to be president) was very active in all projects and constantly aided by her husband and her older son, Russell. After their deaths she turned to her younger son, Walter, and he became one of the three vice-presidents and on his mother's death in 1938, succeeded her as first vice-president. In this office he became one of the most influential members of the Board of Managers and worked to make the Association on Nantucket a contributor to the advancement of science in memory of his kinswoman, Maria Mitchell.

After his retirement from teaching and during life in his pleasant Milton home, he wrote "The Perfect Paradise", an honest and bright book with much wit and humor. He said, frankly, that he wrote the book for his grandchildren and also for himself, commenting that no longer working for the publisher, "now I shall write what I please". Here are the events of his life adroitly put in the background, and stories and incidents and friendships of college and teaching days made to reveal his own attitudes toward friends and literature and life. Here, too, he has preserved the romance of his visit to Ludlow, England, and his meeting the Hendersons and his future wife, Julia, at "The Castle"—the old gate house of Ludlow Castle much enlarged.

Walter Hinchman was in his 76th year; he is survived by his widow, Mrs. Julia Henderson Hinchman, two sons, Richard and John, four daughters, Mrs. Harwin Schaefer (Hildegard), Mrs. Joel L. Bowditch (Mary), Mrs. J. Malcolm Barter (Dorothea), Mrs. Richard S. Slawson (Margaret), and sixteen grandchildren.

### OBITUARY.

MACY.—We are called upon to record today the death of one of Nantucket's most talented daughters—Miss Fanny M. Macy—who passed away on the 20th instant at Garfield Memorial Hospital, Washington. Miss Macy has for some time been in feeble health and was on her way home from Asheville, N. C., where she had been in the hope of seeking relief. She was so much prostrated, however, that she was obliged to stop at Washington, where she died. Deceased was a daughter of Anne M. and the late Alfred Macy, and was a charming young lady, highly cultured, and beloved by a wide circle of friends. To her mother the bereavement is very severe, and to her will go forth the tender sympathies of the community.

Dec 28, 1889

PERSONAL.—Miss Fanny Macy, who has been studying art for the past two winters with Gaugengigh, in this city, is the niece of Prof. Maria Mitchell, the astronomer. She has recently made what is said to be an excellent portrait of her distinguished aunt. Miss Macy spends her summers in Nantucket, where there is much to employ her in the abundant picturesque sketching material.—Boston Sunday Herald.

July 1, 1882

PAINTINGS.—Three very handsome specimens of panel painting, executed to order by Mrs. Fannie S. Macy, were shipped in the boat on Wednesday. One was a representation of a tuft of "cat-o'-nine-tail" flags with a blue heron standing at the foot; one a blasted tree, on the leafless branches of which a pair of red-winged blackbirds had made their nest; and the third bouquets of flowers. Mrs. Macy is an artist of rare skill, and her work is fast finding favor.

1878



# NAMED ON HER MERITS.

MRS. ELLEN M. MITCHELL APPOINTED AS A MEMBER OF THE CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION.

When the members of the board of education gather together to-morrow night, there will be a woman among them—a real live specimen of the so-called weaker sex. Yielding to the pressure brought to bear on him, Mayor Roche has appointed Mrs. Ellen M. Mitchell to take the place of one of the members whose term has just expired.

Two years ago the Women's club petitioned Mayor Harrison to put a woman on the board, but the mayor never saw fit to recognize the claims of the petitioners. When Roche was elected the attack was begun with renewed vigor. Roche was afraid to comply with the request at the time, being so new in office and having so many friends of Mr. Davis to provide for. He said, however, that when the next term expired he would see that the women were recognized. He said he would be glad to see five women on the board, providing they were made of the right stuff.

As the time drew near the Women's club selected the names of Mrs. Ellen M. Mitchell and Mrs. Charles Henrotin and presented them for the mayor's consideration, with a petition setting forth the claims of women in general and of their candidates in particular. They pointed to the fact that women successfully served on the school boards of Boston, Philadelphia, London, and New York; that there were 1,384 female and 56 male teachers in the Chicago schools, and that it was not right that the interests of these women should be wholly trusted to men. The work of the nineteen standing committees of the board is such as would be greatly benefited and expedited by the help and counsel of women members.

The club had plenty of other names it might have urged, but it did not wish Mayor Roche to draw entirely from its selection. As it was, he has up to date only selected one of the two names, although he may choose Mrs. Henrotin before the next council meeting. With Mrs. Carse on the County, and Mrs. Mitchell on the City board of education, the women of Chicago think they see the beginning of better days, especially when they know that the selection of these women was made upon their own merits, and was not due to any political influence, such as secure the appointment of most of the members.

Mrs. Mitchell is the wife of Mr. Frank M. Mitchell, an old board of trade man, and one of "Old Hutch's" lieutenants. She is a native of Nantucket island, where her father, Joseph Mitchell, was a man of considerable prominence, having been member of both houses of legislature and auditor of the state. Through her mother, a Miss Folger, she is a lineal descendant with Benjamin Franklin and Lucretia Mott, of old Peter Folger, the sage of Nantucket. Maria Mitchell, the astronomer, late of Vassar, is a sister of Mrs. Mitchell's husband, and her own cousin. Dr. Clifford Mitchell, professor of chemistry, in the Chicago Homeopathic Medical college, is a son of Mrs. Mitchell, and Dr. J. S. Mitchell, the president of that school, is her brother. Mrs. Mitchell has been interested in educational affairs and the advancement of women all her life, speaking and writing in their interests whenever she has had an opportunity. As far back as 1880 she was vice president with Miss Doggett, of the Illinois Association for the Advancement of Women. She was for several terms on the directory of the Erring Women's refuge, and later still edited the journal of that institution. She has been associated with Miss Doggett in many movements for the advancement of her sex and of education, always maintaining decidedly liberal and progressive opinions in those matters. She is one of the charter members of the Fortnightly club, having helped to start that very excellent organization. In religion she is a Swedenborgian; in politics she is for the party which will admit women to equal suffrage with men. She was one of the principal onlookers at the recent women's congress at Washington. Mrs. Mitchell's lectures on "George Sand," "The Troubadour," and other subjects have given her considerable reputation on the platform, and through her constant writing on educational topics, she has been recognized in the field of letters, as a woman of advanced theories and original ideas.

"I have no ideas to express in advance," she said, referring to her appointment. "My candidacy for the position was simply in the form of having my name brought forward by the educational committee of the Women's club. I have not yet been officially notified of my appointment, but even if I had I could not say more than I have done. I am grateful to the Women's club, and to Mayor Roche for selecting me for the position. It is something that I prize very highly, for educational interests have been my study for many years. I will take my place in the board with no axe to grind and with no hobby to ride. I will simply try to do my duty as a member."

It is said that the men who compose the board are preparing to give Mrs. Mitchell a warm reception. That gifted and chivalrous orator, Millard B. Herely, is intrusted with the duty of welcoming her with a gallant speech, and Graeme Stewart is to have charge of the flowers and the general reception. The members, it is said, will be much more particular about their dress. Smoking is to be prohibited at board meetings, and putting your feet on the desks is tabooed. The venerable Sheppard Johnson was seen yesterday, purchasing a box of paper collars and a butterfly necktie, and it was rumored around the city hall that Supt. Howland had given a boot-black a contract for a daily shine.

The changes in the board will, in all probability, strengthen the anti-German sentiment in that body, whether anything of the kind was intended or not. Mr. Niehoff, who was dropped, always championed that special study, and in disposing of him it is believed that the cause of popular education has been advanced a pace in the schools. In the removal of Mr. Stensland, too, German loses one of its friends, while, on the other hand, it is not believed that it has gained a single advocate in the new appointments. It is natural to expect that the continuation of the study in the schools will be one of the early questions considered by the new board, and whether the opposition is found strong enough to discontinue it or not, it is certain that the anti-German sentiment is growing, and that it is only a matter of time when the example of St. Louis will be followed in the matter.

"Not one of the new appointees sought the position," said Mayor Roche yesterday, "which is without precedent, I think."

"Were any of them selected with a view to affecting the special studies?"

"Certainly not, for I have no idea how they stand on the subject."

"Did any of the old members seek reappointment?"

"Mr. Garvey's friends came to see me, but I did not hear from the others."

In the reorganization of the board the presidency will go to either F. W. Peck, or J. M. Clark, both of whose names are being canvassed in connection with the position.—*The Chicago Times*, July 27, 1888.

1888

COMPLIMENTARY TO A DAUGHTER OF NANTUCKET.—The Chicago Globe of the 10th inst., thus speaks of a former townsman, who is one of the candidates for election to the school board of that city:

Mrs. Ellen Mitchell, who is well known as having, with Mrs. Kate Doggett, founded the Fortnightly, one of the most prominent and exclusive women's clubs in America, and also through her active work for many years for the Erring Women's refuge, comes from a long line of scholarly, public-spirited men and women, of which she is no unworthy representative. She was born on the island of Nantucket, and her father was Hon. Joseph Mitchell, who was at different times a member of both houses of the legislature, and later auditor of the state of Massachusetts. His daughter asserts, with filial pride, that he was a man greatly honored, and that almost every dispute of the quaint islanders was referred to him for arbitration, and also that he was president of the Coffin school, and chairman of the public school committee to the end of his life. Through her mother, who was a Folger, Mrs. Mitchell is a lineal descendant, as were Benjamin Franklin, and Lucretia Mott, of Nantucket's famous sage, Peter Folger. Maria Mitchell, the renowned discoverer of comets and professor of astronomy at Vassar College, is a sister of Mrs. Mitchell's husband, and her own cousin. In speaking of this dual relationship, Mrs. Mitchell laughingly remarks that as "a good name is better than riches," and as she was always rather proud of her own name, she married a relative and did not change her name.

Dr. J. S. Mitchell, president of the Chicago Homeopathic Medical College is Mrs. Mitchell's brother, and her son, Dr. Clifford Mitchell, is professor of chemistry in the same school.

Mrs. Mitchell is at present editing the paper which is published in the interests of the Erring Woman's refuge, in addition to her duties as one of the directors of that institution. She is a woman of fine education and rare accomplishments, and has been a close student, not only of books but events, keeping well up with the trend of the times, and in selecting her for one of the candidates for appointment on the board of education, the ladies have chosen one who may be a valuable addition to the Chicago school board.

1886

For the Inquirer and Mirror.

Dr. J. Sidney Mitchell.

Nantucket has no name more cherished on her honor-roll of worthy sons, than that of Dr. J. Sidney Mitchell. The telegram announcing his death was a shock to all in our island home. To many of our townspeople his name was familiar, although unacquainted, perhaps, with his endearing personality. He was a prominent physician in Chicago; President of the Homeopathic College of that city, and held in high esteem by members of the medical profession. He presided during the World's Homeopathic Convention at the Columbian Exposition. Dr. Mitchell was universally beloved by the students who came immediately under his direction. His college associates will not fail to signalize his arduous services, or his valuable contributions to medical science.

I would speak of him as I knew him. He honored his responsible profession. His was the quiet dignity of a well-bred gentleman. In him there was never the least display of professional egotism, which one sometimes encounters in men of his exalted calling. He was modest, always, yet firm in his decisions; mild, yet forceful in his opinions; courteous to all. In his clear eyes there sparkled the calm of a noble consciousness of purpose, heightened in its influence by an intellectual balance, directly inherited from a distinguished ancestry. His smile was like a tonic to the invalid. In any important conference his presence commanded respect.

The death of Dr. Mitchell has left a brooding shadow on the sill of the Nantucket Historical Association, of which he was the honored President. I have not forgotten his kindly words in the old North Vestry, last summer, in the event of his re-election. How little we thought that he had presided for the last time! At the reception in the evening, at the home of Mrs. Elizabeth Starbuck, how courtly was his manner, how genial his greeting. All that human sympathy can bestow, is affectionately accorded to the bereaved widow, one daughter and two sons, mother and sister, who survive him, not to forget a large circle of relatives and friends. Hard by his childhood's home that I can now see from my window (and such a refined home it was, wherein as boys, we shared our games together), I can hear, if I listen, The white lips of the ocean murmur on;

As oft the soul's unrest will breathe a sigh;

Why do we weep for our loved kindred gone,

If we shall greet each other, bye-and-bye?

During many a long winter evening to come, only the unsullied thought of him will invade my memory, lightly as snow-flakes fall, whose purity is typical of "the beloved physician," the noble man, the faithful friend!

ARTHUR ELWELL JENKS.

## Obituary.

Mrs. J. Sidney Mitchell, a woman beloved by all, passed away at her home on Main street about midnight on Saturday last at the ripe age of ninety-five. Through her kindly disposition and hospitable manner she had endeared herself to a host of friends and acquaintances. Always helpful and interested, despite her increasing years, Mrs. Mitchell proved a delightful hostess as long as her health would permit, and her home always extended a cheery welcome.

She was especially interested in the young children of the town and for a number of years in succession entertained them at Christmas time by what was known to the little ones as "Mrs. Mitchell's party". She enjoyed the young people and took real pleasure in making them happy.

She was a regular attendant at the Unitarian Church as long as her health would permit and was deeply interested in the work of a number of the benevolent organizations of the town, contributing freely towards any movement which she felt was of benefit to the community.

Helen Leeds Mitchell was born in 1835, a native of Philadelphia, the daughter of Joseph Leeds and Arethusa Clapp. She married the late Dr. J. Sidney Mitchell, who was one of the best-known physicians in Chicago for many years. He was of direct Nantucket lineage and throughout their married life, Dr. and Mrs. Mitchell maintained a keen interest in everything pertaining to the island.

Mrs. Mitchell is survived by a daughter, Mrs. James Todd, and by two sons, Sidney Mitchell of New York, and Leeds Mitchell of Chicago.

Funeral services were held at the Mitchell residence on Main street at 11 o'clock, Wednesday morning, the Rev. Josiah C. Kent, a former pastor of the Unitarian church and a close friend of the deceased, officiating. The services were simple and the pastor's remarks most appropriate. Vocal music was rendered by Mrs. John J. Gardner, Harry E. Smith and Peter M. Hussey. There was a profusion of floral tributes, attesting the esteem in which the deceased was held by all.

The honorary pall bearers were Walter I. Brock, Everett Jerome, Fred V. Fuller, Frederick C. Ayers, Austin Strong, Capt. B. Whitford Joy, Dr. O. D. Wescott, Herbert S. Kellogg, Judge R. T. Fitz-Randolph, John M. Winslow and Karl Adams.

Nov. 12, 1898

Nov. 1, 1930



For the Inquirer and Mirror.

Died at Chicago, on the 15th inst., Ellen Mitchell, widow of the late Francis M. Mitchell, of Nantucket.

Ellen Mitchell was born on the island of Nantucket, where she resided until about 1861. She was educated in our public schools, and graduated with honors from our High School. The subject of our sketch was a rare character. The union of a highly refined, sensitive organization with remarkable firmness of will and strength of purpose, enabled her, without exciting prejudice, to surmount obstacles in the path of woman's elevation (a score of years ago so much more formidable than at present), and to stand in the foreground of the battle of life, cheering and encouraging all with whom she was associated. She added high culture to great intellectual ability, and was an advanced thinker and worker, helping to lift the social standard, especially by laboring to promote the higher education of woman. She was an earnest and enthusiastic advocate for the suffrage of woman, holding this attitude uncompromisingly on all occasions. The opposing radical and conservative tendencies of her mind, like centrifugal and centripetal forces, were so happily balanced as to make her judgment a criterion and her influence a power for good wherever she was known.

When she was elected a member of the educational board in Chicago, there was a general expression that "she was the right woman in the right place." At that time it was quite phenomenal for a woman to be an active member of a large board of education, composed as was the one in Chicago, with the exception of herself, wholly of men. She maintained that position with wonderful dignity and composure through the entire course of four years' service, until, in consequence of failing health, she was compelled to resign. She worked right royally with loving devotion and a deep sense of personal responsibility. The new school-house in Chicago, bearing her name, "Ellen Mitchell," is a fitting, richly-deserved tribute to her memory.

When any helpful work was to be done for any class of society, even the most degraded, it was very easy for the subject of our notice to set aside aesthetic taste for music, art and poetry (in all of which she was a connoisseur if not a proficient), and gladly to go down to social depths with a hope to alleviate misery or to lift up fallen humanity. Considering how many of this latter class are the hapless victims of circumstance, it was a work she loved—entertaining for them the warmest sympathy, the deepest commiseration. How many among these will rise up to call her blessed!

A large number of devoted friends, especially in her native town and in Chicago, the city of her adoption, are left to mourn her loss. In the terrible bereavement, when the idol of the home-circle is taken away, how inadequate are words to comfort and soothe. Loving relations are never prepared for the supreme moment of transition. The departed spirit, passed beyond the vale which separates the seen from the unseen—the mortal from the immortal—freed from earthly dross, may work along the same lines of thought and effort, stretching nobly into the eternities to find larger and broader scope, imparting soul-satisfaction which earth-life could never afford. The relatives of the departed are all well known and beloved in our community. We can only tender to them our heart-felt sympathy.

With the loved one gone before, earth's jarring discords are at an end. In passing through the shadow of the valley of Death let us be assured the key was found which opened to her entranced vision the golden portals of a higher and better life.

A. G.

## OBITUARY.

HON. JOSEPH MITCHELL.

The sting of Death has never been more generally felt in this community than was the case on Sunday last, when the sudden decease of one of Nantucket's most honored citizens—Hon. Joseph Mitchell—was announced, after but a few hours' illness. The intelligence was received with a manifest feeling of sadness, and the sense of bereavement grew deeper as time gave opportunity for reflection upon a life characterized by spotless integrity in its private as well as in a long career of public service, and "well done" may be justly written against its record, as a mark of merit. Mr. Mitchell was quiet, unassuming and genial, and wore a dignity that well accorded with his action. Though many years in public life, he made few if any enemies, his calm decision winning friends from the ranks of opposing elements rather than the reverse, and in other ways, too, has his life been such that the world is better for his having lived; and the last tributes paid to his memory were deserved testimonials to the noble career of a thorough gentleman.

In 1848 he was elected to the State Legislature, and represented the town in the House and Senate with commendable ability. During his term in the upper house, the office of State Auditor was created, and his fitness for its duties secured for him an appointment to the office by the Governor. He was appointed postmaster by President Fillmore and served during his administration.

In 1858 he commenced his career in the Pacific Bank as assistant cashier, and was appointed cashier upon the resignation of Hon. William Mitchell, which office he filled until April, 1879, when failing health demanded his retirement. He served as a director of that institution up to the time of his death, and has also been chairman of the board of Assessors for three years past. He has for many years been a member of the board of Trustees of the Coffin School, which was closed Thursday afternoon in respect to his memory. Deceased was twice married, and leaves a widow, and three children by his first wife. The latter arrived here from Chicago Wednesday in time to attend the funeral services, which were held Thursday afternoon in the Unitarian Church, where he had long been a member. There was a large gathering of citizens present. The remains were brought into the church from his late residence, Messrs. F. C. Sanford, D. C. Baxter, A. M. Myrick, E. W. Perry, Andrew Whitney and J. B. Macy acting as pall-bearers, and an organ voluntary being played as the remains were taken up the aisle to the pulpit, on which was a beautiful display of flowers, arranged by loving hands. Rev. H. F. Bond, the pastor, read a brief Scripture lesson, and the choir sang the fitting anthem, "Thy Will, O God, be Done." The pastor then said:

We think there is great beauty and charm in the innocence of childhood. Certainly there is; and we have no misgivings as to their destiny; but that being is more beautiful, more charming, more glorious, who has passed through a long life of difficulties, temptations, perplexities and trials, and sustained an upright character. The positive virtues of manhood far surpass the sinlessness of infancy. More appropriate words than I can utter might be spoken of Mr. Mitchell by one of the many acquainted with him by long years of intercourse; yet to know him briefly were to respect and honor him, and my professional habit of distinguishing right and wrong may have enabled me better to appreciate and admire his excellencies of character.

The very family name of Mitchell has long been a synonym for goodness, and none have honored that name more than he. Scarce a stranger in town, however brief his stay, left without the conviction that there was one man at least who could hardly do wrong. He was sure there was one whom widows and orphans, and indeed all men, women and children trusted. And so this upright man became the adviser, the guardian, the trustee of many who needed his wisdom and who implicitly relied on his honesty. There is no grander object on this wide earth than a man of three or four score years without a shadow of reproach—a man so complete in his character and so thoroughly tested that his character and reputation have become one and the same. Next to the desire of a conscience void of offence before God is the ambition to be loved and honored of all men for solid worth. Joseph Mitchell has gone in and out among you for many, many years, always the same modest, even-tempered, wise, honest soul. He held many offices of honor and trust in your town and in your state. Filling them all well and often commended, how his noble ambition must have been satisfied! What peace to his soul in his consciousness of rectitude!

As trustee of the Coffin School, a position he long held, it is easy even for one who knew him no better than I, to understand how great the confidence placed in him by his associates—the respect and reverence with which he was regarded by the pupils. In departing he has left sweet memories for you all, and a wealth of example beyond all estimate of scales or measures.

It is easy to realize the immortality of excellence. We naturally have faith in goodness. There is also strong ground for hope that kinship in purity of spirit shall be vouchsafed sweet communion in time to come. It is not needful that we should know exactly what treasures the loving God has in store for the pure in heart and holy in life. Better is it to believe that riches for such souls must be greater than the heart of man can conceive. No suddenness of call can find such souls unprepared. Our friend was fitted to die by his fitness to live. We fear not for him—we mourn not for him—we mourn for ourselves. Let us be equally ready by steadfastness in duty and child-like confidence.

"As God leads me, it is mine  
To follow Him;  
Soon shall all wonderfully shine,  
Which now seems dim.  
Fulfilled be His decree!  
What He shall choose for me,  
That shall my portion be,  
Up to the brim."

At the conclusion of the remarks, Mr. B. G. Tobey sang "Come Ye Disconsolate," and at a most impressive moment in the solemn service, Dr. Arthur E. Jenks read the accompanying tender memorial, having been requested so to do by the family of the deceased.

### In Memory of Hon. Joseph Mitchell.

"Fallen Asleep" April 26, 1885.

BY DR. ARTHUR E. JENKS.

How beautiful is character! No crown  
Like this adorns the brow; its fadeless light  
Is brighter than the lustre of fine gold!  
No kingship like the life of him who lies  
So peaceful in his rest—mourned by his friends,  
Our seaport town, and the old Commonwealth:  
The upright citizen, and Christian man!

May his pure mantle fall upon the son;  
His staff of honor for his strong right hand!  
His gift of love become the daughters' shrine;  
A memory, whose incense shall make sweet  
Their future years: weaving a golden thread  
Thro' all life's toil and care, from earth to Heaven!  
For the devoted wife, alone in her  
Great grief, th' example of her husband, his  
Fidelity to trust, now shines like some  
Fixed star, whose mild light shall still cheer her heart  
With faith in God, and immortality!

"Nearer, My God, to Thee" was rendered by the choir, and after prayer, the funeral procession moved to Prospect Hill Cemetery, where the remains were interred.

## OBITUARY.

Dr. Joseph Sidney Mitchell, president of the Chicago Homeopathic Medical College and one of the foremost exponents of the Hahnemann doctrines, died Friday morning at 7 o'clock at his home, 2954 Prairie Avenue, aged 59 years. His death was sudden, resulting from the rupture of a blood vessel near the heart during a coughing spell. He had been ailing for several weeks with the grip, but was able to leave his home every day and a fatal termination of his illness was not looked for. Dr. Mitchell died as he had lived, in the harness. The day before his death he made eight professional calls, and just began to realize that he was seriously ill a few hours before the end. His death was a grievous shock not only to his family, but to his professional associates and to many citizens to whom he had endeared himself.

Born at Nantucket, in 1839, Dr. Mitchell spent his boyhood here and received his elementary education in the schools of the town. Later he fitted for college in the high school of Boston, and in 1859 entered Williams College, from which he graduated four years later with the degree of bachelor of arts. Having completed the regular collegiate course, he at once entered upon his professional studies in Bellevue Medical College, whose diploma was conferred on him in 1865.

Immediately after graduation he went to Chicago and practiced his profession there steadily for thirty-three years. Dr. Mitchell became a convert to homeopathy shortly after his arrival in Chicago, and was appointed lecturer on surgical and pathological anatomy in Hahnemann Medical College. The reorganization of the Chicago Homeopathic Medical College in 1876 was wholly due to his efforts and was, in fact, contemporaneous with his election to the presidency of that institution.

He was president of the world's congress of homeopathic physicians and surgeons held in Chicago during the world's fair. His address to the assembled disciples of Hahnemann was one of the ablest papers read in the progress of the series of world's congresses.

While warily devoted to Chicago's interests Dr. Mitchell ever retained a deep affection for his native home, and it was his custom for many years to spend his summer vacations at Nantucket. Only a few months ago he bought a cottage here, intending that it should be his permanent summer home. He was president of the Historical Society of Nantucket.

Dr. Mitchell married in 1876 Miss Helen Leeds of Philadelphia, who survives him with two sons and one daughter. The sons are Sidney and Leeds Mitchell. The daughter is the wife of Attorney James Todd.

May 2, 1885

Nov. 10, 1898



In Memoriam.

MRS. ELIZA W. MITCHELL,

February 27, 1898.

The death of this most estimable lady removes from our midst a remarkable personality. Living to the great age of 88, she retained the appearance of a much younger person, and to the last her mental faculties, which were of no common order, remained clear and unimpaired. She was gifted with a memory that retained every impression, and her mind was a rich store-house of the past history and traditions of our people. She was always considered an excellent authority on these subjects. Bright and genial in manner, she attracted to herself a large number of people (including many visitors from abroad), who never wearied of her reminiscences of bygone days. She had many correspondents, and her letters displayed a graceful combination of dignity and humor. She was a great reader, and was fond of the poetry of the natural school, delighting in the works of the immortal Burns, and of other Scottish minstrels.

She would on occasions address her friends in simple, unaffected verse; but her prose was far better than her verse, and her conversation superior to either. Though fond of talking of the past, she retained a lively interest in current events, and would discuss them with keen humor and good sense.

It is a fact worth recording, that, up to her last illness, she had always given her personal supervision to her household affairs, even doing with her own hands all mending of clothing. Mrs. Mitchell was of an affectionate disposition and her broad sympathy was ever responsive to all good enterprises. Her charitable deeds were frequent and without ostentation. Her physical condition had for years been very precarious, and the prolonging of her life was doubtless due to a large extent to the constant and tender ministrations of her sons. To these in their affliction great sympathy is due. May their sadness of parting be tempered by the memory of her simple faith in the over-ruling Power.

In this day of insatiable ambition and restless striving after "the new," is it not worth while for the younger generation to stay a moment to contemplate the life of this cheerful, patient, indomitable soul, who, under the weight of years and physical weakness, preserved unto the end a perennial youth? In the sphere of home she

"bore the noiseless tenor of her way" and was content. There are other and wider fields for the energies of women. Are there any better?

H. S. WYER.

Feb. 27, 1898







re  
pe  
88  
m  
he  
co  
in  
on  
he  
pe  
St  
at  
ge  
a  
m  
w  
da  
an  
co  
wa  
pe  
in  
of  
fr  
he  
an  
T  
re  
ev  
ke  
he  
he  
ho  
ha  
M  
an  
sp  
ch  
wi  
dit  
ous  
do  
con  
son  
syn  
par  
her  
I  
res  
wor  
to  
of  
sou  
phy  
end  
of h  
and  
wid  
Are